Mr PUNCH'S CHILDREN'S HOUR

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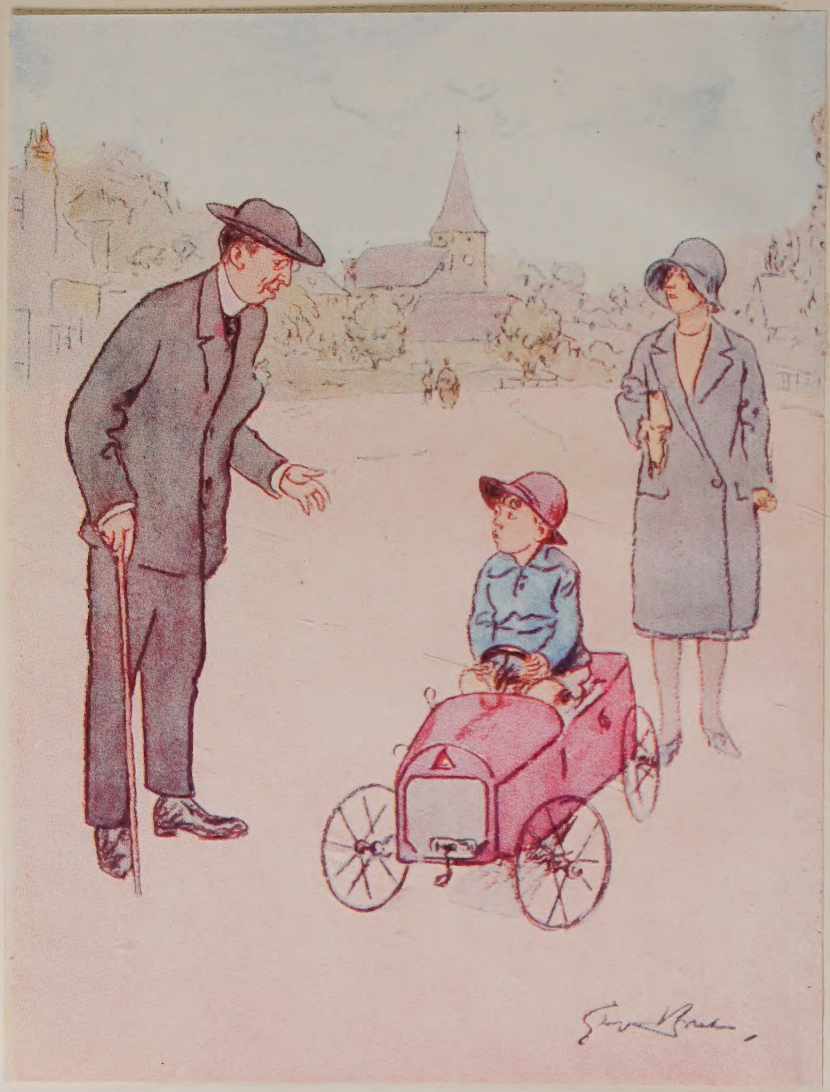
VOLUME V

MR. PUNCH'S CHILDREN'S HOUR



VICAR. "Well, Bobby, how's your motor-car?"
BOBBY. "Quite well, thank you; how's your church?

MR. PUNCH'S CHILDREN'S HOUR

With 243 Illustrations
& Frontispiece in Colours

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LONDON
THE EDUCATIONAL BOOK COMPANY LTD.

THE NEW "PUNCH" LIBRARY

TWENTY VOLUMES

1. Mr. Punch's Cavalcade : A Revue of Thirty Years
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BY R. & R. CLARK LIMITED EDINBURGH

THIS VOLUME OF OUR LIBRARY MUST BE VERY NEAR TO Mr. Punch's heart, for, in violent contrast to the traditional Punch, our Mr. Punch always has been a lover of children. He has given us unnumbered pictures and prose sketches of child life; he has shown the little folk at their best and at their worst; has introduced us to them in their cots, their prams, their schools, their homes, and when they have adventured away from the parental nest. Children are the boldest philosophers, and as Mr. Punch is essentially a philosopher, he and the youngsters are at one.

It has been one of the Editor's most difficult tasks to arrange this particular volume; there was so great a mass of matter from which to choose, and to his regret he had to omit much that was worthy of inclusion. What he has included has been chosen not because the pictures or the words were by artists or authors who had reached towards fame and found it, but because their work was the best: was of such an order that its inclusion in the Library was imperative. If they appear here again and again, that is merely a tribute to their particular genius.

Every now and then Mr. Punch's kindly heart stirs him to appeal for the support of some worthy cause, and it is safe to assume that such appeals are never made more strongly or more enthusiastically than when they are made in the interests of children. Mention of that is made here not because anything in this volume strikes a serious note—on the contrary it is one of the gayest in the Library—but because it shows one of the most lovable aspects of the old jester's character, and is well worth the noting.

IT is doubtful if Mr. Punch and his able band of humorists ever work more happily than when among the youngsters, and in the following pages the funny side of child life is depicted for us with a freshness and charm which must surely captivate even such curmudgeonly souls as affect to regard all children as nuisances. Not that Mr. Punch shuts his very observant eyes to the fact that a child can be, and frequently is, a menace to peace, and can do or say things that shatter the patience and strain the nerves of the grown-ups. Incidents of that sort will be met with here, but how skilfully they are presented, and how whole-heartedly we enjoy them! The little terrors do not terrify us because, for the time being at least, we are definitely on their side.

The artists and authors whose work goes to the making of this book are obviously not merely child-lovers but are blessed with an understanding of the child mind and a sympathy with childish troubles and perplexities. Children whose cricket-pitch is a slum street or those who have been born and reared in an atmosphere of wealth are equally capable of providing entertainment

at its most joyous—and when such entertainment is given unconsciously it is probably richest in point.

Several fine specimens of Mr. George Belcher's work appear here for our delight, and side by side, so to speak, the tattered gamins whom Mr. G. L. Stampa has studied with such brilliant results go with the delicately drawn little girls and boys of Mayfair introduced by Mr. Lewis Baumer, whose delightful episodes from the Children's Hour, chosen for reproduction here, outnumber those of any other artist, Mr. Stampa's not less delightful gamins being their nearest competitors in point of numbers. But indeed on every page of this volume we find something to cheer us—pictures which help us to recapture our own childhood at its happiest; prose or verse in the reading of which we forget whatever troubles may have been ours.

TRIBUTE has been paid elsewhere to the work produced by Mr. Punch's poets, but in his Children's Hour they have sung songs with a specially pleasing lilt; have, in the magical way of their kind, brought beauty to the printed page and a delicate flavour beyond analysis. Then there are the prose contributions with their telling descriptions of just such small bundles of mischief or temporary goodness as we all know or have known. We are made to understand, and in the jolliest possible way, something of what is going on inside the head of, let us say, Master Bobby or Miss Peggy; are constrained to reflect that the child can be not merely bright and amusing, but inquisitive, persistent, sober-sided and, on occasion, devastatingly logical!

THROUGHOUT the whole of his long life—and he is not very far away now from the century—Mr. Punch has been in a very real sense the small folk's friend, a sort of perfected uncle who never permits the passing of the years to age him and whose spirits are for ever buoyant. Well served by his merry men in the past, he has never been better served than now; in the Children's Hour their enthusiasm has matched his own, and we who handle this volume are able to take to ourselves something of their fervour.

There are here pictures and jokes which one may safely regard as being in that high and unusual class where staleness can never enter; pictures and jokes, and little stories, and lovely rhymes, to which we will gladly turn again and again in the years ahead, and over which the children of today will browse with like delight when childhood has been left behind.

And so the moment is ours now to put all cares away and to take Mr. Punch by the hand and, giving our other hand to some child, enter between Age and Youth into the playground which has been prepared.

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MR. PUNCH'S CHILDREN'S HOUR

Be a Little Man

IT happened on the Undercliff Drive at Bournemouth. Nurse had only just stopped to rest, for the pram was heavy, the Rolls-Royce of prams indeed, and the serial in "Home Echoes" was just too thrilling. The dark-haired villain had just locked the bedroom door when Bobby started to whimper. She let him whimper while the villain clasped the heroine roughly by the waist.

"Be quiet, Bobby!"

But Bobby wouldn't be quiet.

"Don't be a baby," she scolded; "be a little man."

Bobby ceased to whimper and fixed a penetrating eye on her. Nurse gasped, for his gaze had lost its happy baby expression. It was a face as old as the hills, with little crows'-feet at the corner of its eyes.

"Well," Bobby snapped in a dry shrill voice, "are we to stay here all night? When you're quite ready, my girl."

This from a baby whose vocabulary consisted of ten words, most of which could only be distinguished by his mother.

Nurse slowly propelled the Rolls-Royce of prams.

"Not that way, damn you!" said Bobby with great distinctness.

"Bobby!" she almost screamed. "You naughty boy! Mustn't use such wicked words."

"Go to blazes," said the baby, chuckling quietly. "Don't be so milk-and-watery, girl. Bless you, you're not so innocent when you're off duty. I've seen you, you baggage."

"One more word from you, Master Bobby, and home you go."

"I'll not go home. Take me where I can get a drink."

"Why, you've just had your milk."

"Milk! Did you say milk? I've a throat like a lime-kiln and you talk of milk."

BIG SISTER. "Mummy, baby gets lower-classer and lower-classer every day."

"Don't be naughty, darling. Where can you have picked up these naughty words?"

"Where can I pick up a good drink?"

"Oh, what do you want?"

"Special Scotch—at once."

An elderly short-sighted gentleman peered at the contents of the pram.

"There's nothing quite so fresh and charming as an English baby. Hello, Baby Bunting!"

"Hello yourself, old cock!" was the surprising response. "What's going to win the two-thirty?"

The short-sighted gentleman fled. Nurse sat down and wept.

"Whatever's come to the poor lamb? Whatever will his mother say when she comes to see me bath him?"

"Bath me!" snapped Bobby. "Do you mean that a parcel of women mean to bath me? This is a conspiracy, a conspiracy, you—you slut. In another minute I'll get out and walk."

"You—you can't walk. You—you haven't been learnt——"

"Taught, girl, taught."

"T—taught yet, Sir. I don't know what's come over me."

"Neither do I. Stop snivelling. In my young days girls never snivelled.

"Mother, why didn't we have a baby with a head at each end?"

MOTHER (*appealing to small daughter to take her medicine*). "Now, Pauline, don't you realise that for the last week I've been running up and down stairs for you, reading to you and playing with you and giving up my whole time to you? Don't you think of all this?"

SMALL DAUGHTER. "I have other things to think about, Mummy."

You've no self-control. Have you got a match on you? What have you done with my cigar-case?"

"Oh, he's gone right out of his mind! I shall be blamed for it, and I've done nothing except have a peep at a book."

"That's right, my girl," said the baby sagely. "Cultivate the mind. It needs it. What's that you're reading? Muck! Throw it away. You're no fit companion for a man of my years."

"Year, Bobby. A year come next Tuesday fortnight."

"Why can't you say the 19th prox.? Come along, wench. Put your best leg forward. Ha! ha! Not bad, either of 'em."

MOTHER (*to small boy who has been to new school for the first day*). "How did you get on, Alfred?"

ALFRED (*a veteran film-fan*). "I hate it, Mummy, and I don't want to go again. Teacher put me in the front row, and I'm not going to sit in the fourpennies."

" You make me blush for shame, Master Bobby. Do be good."
" Hold your tongue, girl."
" Be a good little baby, Bobby," she sobbed.
The features relaxed and the crows'-feet round his eyes filled out.
" Gug ! Gug ! " he cried, kicking lustily.
A retired colonel stopped to look at him.
" Fine little ma——" he began.
" Hush !" said Nurse fiercely.

PARTICULAR LADY (*meeting her small son with his nurse in the Park*). "Who were those children I saw you playing with just now, darling?"

SMALL SON. "Oh, Mummie, I don't think you'd mind my knowing them. You see, their father's something which, when *his* father dies, he'll be *it*."

Scene: Cricket Ground of Preparatory School

SMALL BOY (*to mother who has just bowed to the Earl of Dumpshire*). "Oh, I say, Mother! I hope none of our fellows saw."

MOTHER. "Why? What's the matter?"

SMALL BOY. "Matter! He's the pater of that awful little worm Wurzleton!"

IMPORTANT CALLER. "Have a bit of cake, my dear"—(*pause*)—"Well, what do you say?"

DAUGHTER OF THE HOUSE. "Thank you; and what do *you* say—'Excuse fingers'?"

Alphabet Biscuits

(A Moral Anecdote for the Young)

THE pleasantest time in the nursery is undoubtedly supper-time. Stories go so well then, because even the most boring of them serves to postpone bed-time for a little. So, instead of preparing myself for the evening meal, as I should have done had I been a model guest, I risked being late for it and crept up to the nursery.

Geoffrey, in pyjamas and a dressing-gown, was seated at the table, a plate before him. And on the plate were some of those entrancing biscuits called Alphabet Biscuits—all the letters of the alphabet in edible form.

"Dear me! I haven't seen those for twenty years," I said. "I quite thought they died out with my own youth. Geoffrey, did ever I tell you the story of Mac and the Alphabet Biscuits?"

Geoffrey muttered "No" through a mouthful of letters and gave a wriggle of pleasure. This meant putting off bedtime quite a long way.

"Mac's real name was Montmorency Fitzmontmorency," I began.

"Why did they call him Mac?"

" Because he was so fond of macaroons."

" Oh ! How old was he ? "

" About your age—six or so. One day Mac was wandering about the town, not thinking of where he was going——"

" What was he thinking of ? "

" Macaroons, I expect. Not where he was going, anyway. Presently he found himself in a street he had never been in before. There were high houses on either side, and wedged between two of them was a tiny shop. Over the door was written ' M. Agic, Grocery.'

" Mac stopped in front of it. In his pocket were three pennies which his father, Mr. Fitzmontmorency, or The Fitzmontmorency, had given him that morning for spelling ' pterodactyl ' correctly at the third attempt.

" ' I wonder,' thought he, ' if they have any macaroons.'

" He went in. A little old man with a bald head and spectacles stood behind the counter.

" ' Have you any macaroons ? ' asked Mac.

" ' No-o-o,' said the little old man, ' but I have some Alphabet Biscuits.'

" ' I 'll have two-pennorth,' said Mac, who was a careful boy and would not spend all his money at once. He got quite a lot of Alphabet Biscuits for tuppence.

LITTLE GIRL (*to Mother, who has appeared in a new dress*). "Darling! you *do* look sweet. I really must confectionate you."

"Daddy, why don't they cut the string and let the little ship go by itself?"

"'Ere, easy on a minute; we ain't shook 'ands yet."

MOLLIE (*in difficulties*). "Mummie, will you fread this needle for me? The cotton is sucked ready."

" Just as he was leaving the shop the little old man said, ' Those are magic biscuits, you know. *Whatever you eat you'll be.*' Mac stared at him. ' Yes,' said the old man again, ' whatever you eat you'll be.'

" Mac went off, wondering what on *earth* he could mean ; and while he was wondering he found himself in a street he knew and hurried home. He turned his biscuits out on a plate and looked at them. ' Whatever you eat you'll be,' he kept repeating. Without thinking much what he was doing he picked out FAT. ' Whatever you eat you'll be. If I eat FAT——' He ate FAT. Suddenly he felt himself getting fat. Fatter and fatter he got till he thought he would burst. It was awful. Hurriedly he picked out THIN and ate them. At once he began to get thin again.

" He felt tremendously relieved. And really this was exciting. He ate RICH and found his pockets full of half-crowns. He ate HANDSOME, and went and looked in the glass. His hair had become beautifully curly ; but he had the sort of mouth which old ladies insist upon kissing, so he thought it safer to eat PLAIN, and his face resumed its usual appearance. He tried several things, such as TALL and SHORT, which he had to turn back again ; and then he had a brilliant idea. He had seen a juggler in the market-square some days before, so he ate JUGGLER, and found that he could juggle with the poker, his mother's hat and a couple of plates with the greatest dexterity.

" This amused him for a long time ; but at length he got tired of it and returned to his biscuits. By now there were only four letters left. And what

do you think they were?—RUDE. You know what that spells?—Rude. Exactly. He didn't know really whether . . . but he still was very hungry. He simply couldn't resist it. He ate RUDE. And at that moment his mother came into the room. He put his tongue out at her. She said 'Mac!' and he put it out again. His father came in then and he threw one of the plates at him. They punished him by taking away all his half-crowns. He could still juggle, of course, but he hadn't much time for it because he was always being punished for being rude.

"Once he escaped and searched and searched for the magic grocery that he might buy some more Alphabet Biscuits and eat POLITE. But he never could find the grocery again. He's about nine now, and he's ruder than ever. It's a sad story."

Geoffrey sat very still, wrapped in thought. Presently a seraphic smile spread over his face. He picked out RUDE and ate them. Then his nurse came bustling into the room.

"Bedtime, Geoffrey," she said.

He put out his tongue at her.

A. W. B.

SMALL BOY (*to Mother*). "There are three persons that I love—you and Nanny and me; but me's my favourite."

SMALL GIRL. "Mother, what *did* policemen do when there weren't any motors?"

"Please, Uncle, could we go in next-door? I want to see the rest of the stag."

"An Impregnable Position"

"Now then, you young varmint, coom oot o' there afore I cotches 'old on yer!"

Elizabeth at the Zoo

WHENEVER Elizabeth goes to the Zoo
There's *such* a commotion and hulla-baloo.

The elephant washes his ears and his face
And hooshes the water all over the place.

The lion, who's rather inclined to be vain,
Takes a brush to his tail and a comb to his mane.

The camel stops humphing and puts on a smirk,
And actually offers to do some more work.

The long-necked giraffe is uneasy with doubt—
Supposing Elizabeth misses him out!

The tiger roars loudly whenever she's near him;
He's proud of his voice and he wants her to hear him.

The kangaroo leaps in the air with great vigour,
For someone has told him it's good for the figure.

The big hippopotamus puts up his snout
To ask what on earth the excitement's about.

The gentle gazelle, very tidy and sleek,
Just rubs his cold nose on Elizabeth's cheek.

The woolly white bear waves his great paddy paws
And wistfully looks for her smile of applause.

The solemn baboon, who is seldom gregarious,
Is skittish and friendly and almost hilarious.

The crocodile beams just for once in a way
And ceases from tears for the rest of the day.

The ostrich uncovers his head from the sand
And tries to take hold of Elizabeth's hand.

The pelican opens his bill very wide
To show her how shiny he keeps it inside.

The penguin bows low, getting mixed with his feet,
Like a pompous old gentleman rather replete.

The squirrels rush wildly all over the trees,
Their kind little hearts simply bursting to please.

And everywhere round is a buzz and a hum,
"Oh, *isn't* it thrilling? Elizabeth's come!"

ANOTHER IRISH GRIEVANCE

KINDHEARTED PROTESTANT VICAR. "What is the matter, my child?"
AGGRIEVED NATIVE (*not recognising unfamiliar voice*). "'Tis the way the boys have gone to steal the Clergyman's strawberries while he's up at the Church beyant, and they won't take me wid 'em."

COUNTRY AUNT. "I don't care to see you sprawling about like that, Mabel. It doesn't look very ladylike."
SMALL GIRL. "Ladylike! Really, Aunt! In *our* set it is considered very middle-class to be ladylike."

"For goodness' sake stop this dreadful noise! I can't hear myself speak!"
"But, Mother, surely you can tell what you're saying without having to listen?"

MARJORIE (*in smoking carriage*). "Won't the guard be very cross, Mummy, if we don't smoke?"

Nursery Rhymes revised up to Date

MARJORY came back from the lecture on "Nursery Psychology" looking rather worried. She is taking Barbara's education very seriously, and I guessed that the lecturer had said something that had upset her. A cautious inquiry elicited what it was.

"I don't know what to do. Madame Valessori says that children shouldn't be taught the old Nursery Rhymes."

"Why ever not?" I asked.

"Oh, for heaps of reasons. They're out of touch with modern life and give the child false ideas of the world. Their moral teaching is generally bad. So is their logic. Anyway, all the modern people say that it's wrong to teach them to children, and the nuisance is that I've just had Barbara's nursery repapered with a Nursery Rhyme pattern and she's sure to want to know all about the pictures. We can't have the room repapered again, I suppose?"

I agreed emphatically that we couldn't. "But, look here—why need you tell her the old rhymes if you don't want her to know them? Why not give her some nice new modern ones that won't be open to all these objections? Let's try to write some."

"You begin," said Marjory. "What about 'Cock Robin'? That's not in

touch with modern life; nobody gets killed with a bow-and-arrow nowadays."

I agreed and proceeded to give "Cock Robin" a modern setting :—

"Who killed Cock Robin?"
"I," said the Shrike,
"With my motor-bike,
I killed Cock Robin."

"Who saw him die?"
"I," said the Fly;
"As I motored by
I saw him die."

"Who'll tell the Press?"
"I," said the Wren,
"With my fountain-pen,
I'll tell the Press."

"Now let's try 'Humpty Dumpty,'" I suggested. "Of course that's not logical. It isn't the business of the cavalry or infantry to put a man to-

"Did you get on to the winner?"

"No. I would 'a done if young Alf 'ere 'ad bin a bit older. 'E 'ad the information, but couldn't say the name no'ow."

"I say, Nurse, Father Christmas has sent me a box of real tools."

gether again ; it's a job for the R.A.M.C. How would this do ?—

Humpty Dumpty went up in a plane ;
Humpty Dumpty came down again ;
The whole of His Majesty's Medical Corps
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together once more."

Marjory thought it would do. " Now," she said, " we'll take ' Little Miss Muffet.' That's all wrong. Who ever saw anybody nowadays eating curds and whey ? And surely no up-to-date modern girl is going to be afraid of a mere spider."

This is Marjory's version :—

Little Miss Muffet
Sat in a buffet
Lapping up cocktails galore
The silly old spider
That sat down beside her
Will never do that any more.

While I was writing it down Marjory had got out an old book of Nursery Rhymes and was looking through it. " Here's another one that gives false

"If I didn't have oil, Nanny, should I squeak?"

DAUGHTER (*who has overheard previous conversation between her parents*). "Daddy, the flies in the ointment *have* come. Mummy is shaking hands with one of them."

LUNCHEON HOST (*concluding introduction of distinguished members of his lodge*). "And this, my dear, is Mr. Theophilus Tomkins—er—last but—er—by no means least."

SMALL DAUGHTER. "Which of them *is* least, Daddy?"

ideas of life, ' Oh, hush thee, my baby, thy sire is a knight.' That's not true to life. The ordinary baby's father isn't a knight."

" I don't know about that," I objected ; " I should think it would be about even betting. Every other man in my club seems to be a K.B.E."

" Well, anyway," she retorted, " reminding the child of that wouldn't make it go to sleep ; far more likely to give it a nightmare. We want something practical and soothing."

" How would this do ?" she resumed after a moment's thought—

Oh, hush thee, my baby ; your cot comes from Gage ;
It'll nearly be paid for before you're of age.

No, I don't see how to go on. Let's try something else. Here's ' I saw a ship a-sailing.' Can you bring that up to date ?" I tried.

I saw a ship a-sailing, a-sailing on the sea,
And, oh, but it was laden with alcohol for me ;
There was cognac in the cabin and whisky in the hold,
And gin and rum in puncheons to exchange for Yankee gold.
The sailors were all he-men, the captain was a Wow ;
And when the coastguard met him the captain said, " Here's how."

Meanwhile Marjory had been bringing another old rhyme into touch with modern life :—

" Where are you going to, my pretty maid ?"
" I'm going a-voting, Sir," she said.
" Whom will you vote for, my pretty maid ?"
" The ballot is secret, Sir," she said.

She found it hard to continue at the same high level of modernity and morality, and broke off to join me in an attempt to suit " Hey, Diddle, Diddle " to modern conditions.

Our joint efforts produced this :—

S.O.S., S.O.S.,
Here's the deuce of a mess.
Our staid old Pussy
Is playing Debussy ;
The Cow's gone insane
And is driving a plane ;
Loud laughter goes up
From the Sealyham pup,
And the Dish has been seen
Getting near Gretna Green
In a car with the Spoon
On a brief honeymoon.

" Now," said Marjory, " time for one more before Barbara comes in. See

KIND LADY (*in Bloomsbury boarding-house drawing-room, to little Yankee Girl*). "Aren't you very lonely here without your parents, my dear?"

LITTLE YANKEE. "Oh, no; Momma comes to see me on Mondays and Thursdays; Poppa on Tuesdays and Fridays; Wednesdays and Saturdays the gentlemen who want to marry Momma come, and on Sundays the ladies who want to marry Poppa."

[*Kind Lady horrified.*

TEACHER (*after hearing class recite "The Village Blacksmith"*). "What does 'Week in, week out' mean?"
BOY. "Please, teacher, it means that he works a week, and then takes a week off."

MARGARET (*not satisfied with the parental explanation of the recent disappearance of a pet rabbit*). "Mummy, is—is *this* Gladys?"

HUSBAND. "I can't very well whack the boy without knowing what the offence was."

WIFE. "My dear, it was a word I can't repeat, and he has promised never to say it again."

what you can do with 'Ding, Dong, Bell.' Barbara oughtn't to hear about the cruel little boy who tried to drown the cat."

"Oh, death and damnation,
Puss met an Alsatian,"

I began.

Marjory demurred. "I don't think that's *quite* suitable for the nursery. But here's Barbara. Don't let her see what we've been doing."

I gathered up the papers hurriedly. I had reasons for thinking that it would be better if I withdrew.

I was right. As I left by one door I heard an excited little voice at the other saying, "Oh, Mummy, we had such a *lovely* time while you were out! Daddy came to tea in the nursery and told me all about the pictures on the new paper, 'Cock Robin,' and the 'Cow that jumped over the Moon,' and 'Humpty Dumpty' and *all* of them. Shall I sing you 'Ding, Dong, Bell. Pussy's in the well'?"

Yes, I'm afraid it's too late to do anything about Barbara, but perhaps some other Valessorian would like to make use of our revised Nursery Rhymes.

SPARTAN MOTHER. "What's the matter? What are you crying for?"
STUNG HERO (*who has been taught never to cry for bodily pain*). "Oh, I—I've sat down on a bee, and—I'm so afraid I must have hurt it!"

"Come you out at once, Albert Edward. Do you want to get trench feet?"

My Treat

"TIMOTHY," I said cajolingly, "will you do me a favour?"

"What's a favour?" he asked. He is a kind-hearted child, but he likes to know exactly where he stands.

"It's an expression," I said, "meaning something like 'Will you give me a treat?'"

He looked puzzled.

"But little boys can't give treats to grown-ups, can they?"

The boundless humility of childhood! I suddenly realised why, in spite of all one's early misgivings, it is more fun to be a grown-up after all.

"You see," I explained, "there's a concert I frightfully want to go to, and grown-ups aren't allowed in unless they've got children with them. So I shan't be able to go unless you take me."

"I *was* going to play trains. . . . But still, I'll come if you like," he added kindly. "Do you think I shall like the concert too?"

"Well, of course it's rather a grown-up thing to like," I said with elaborate strategy. "But you might be old enough for it—one never knows. After all, you *are* five-and-a-half."

"Three-quarters," he corrected swiftly, with the kind of look that a Scotsman gives you when you refer to Great Britain as England.

"Of course—I forgot. Oh, *well*, then. . . ."

Observe, I beg you, how skilfully I had arranged matters. Timothy arrived at his first orchestral concert with the strongest possible incentive to enjoy it, yet under no sort of obligation to do so, since it was my treat and not his. So far I had rigorously carried out the principles of my handbook

JACK ASHORE

FOND MOTHER. "You're never satisfied, Jack. When you go to sea you're home-sick, and when you come home you're sea-sick."

on "How to be a Good Mother" (for nowadays, mark you, we approach our job in the proper professional spirit, and no longer rely upon our so-called maternal instinct to pull us through). But there was another precept very appropriate to this occasion which I knew I must be careful to bear in mind: "*On no account introduce music to children in the form of pictures. Allow the child to experience his own reactions without prompting. Visual interpretation should be studiously avoided.*"

This was easy enough at first, for Timothy was so much interested in the vastness of the hall and the presence of two thousand other children that his senses could take in nothing more. Presently, however, he turned his attention to the music, and then came the fateful question—

"But, Mummy, what's it all *about*?"

Resolutely I remembered my little handbook; inflexibly I resisted the temptation to make things easy for Timothy; firmly I took the programme away from him and sat on it, for the writer of the programme notes, to my secret uneasiness, evidently had other views on the subject of "visual interpretation."

"Just listen," I whispered, "and don't talk till afterwards."

HOSTESS (*who has told her schoolboy visitors to help themselves to strawberries*). "Well, have you found some nice ones?"

LIONEL. "Oh yes, thanks very much—and I'm afraid we've taken rather a lot; but then, as I said to Herbert, it's the chance of a lifetime."

KATHLEEN (*busy with the chocolates*). "Mother, what *can* thrushes see in worm?"

So he listened. He listened to the whole of the " Jupiter " Symphony and looked interested but unmoved. He listened to Weber's Concert-Piece in F minor and looked happy but mystified. He began to listen to the " Fingal's Cave " Overture, and suddenly his eyes lit up, his whole face became alive with understanding ; he wriggled like a sleeping dog who is dreaming of rabbits.

" I know what *this* one's about ! " he squeaked excitedly.

How right, how triumphantly right had my handbook proved itself ! A hundred years ago a boy of twenty heard the long Atlantic rollers breaking in a cave in the Hebrides ; to-day his music is played, and a child of five, unaided by any suggestion, hears them too. How thankful I felt that I had left Timothy alone with his own reactions !

The waves swelled and gathered, thundered and crashed and echoed in Fingal's Cave. Two thousand children sat enchanted, and when it was finished four thousand small hands clapped and fluttered till the hall looked like a silver birch-tree in a wind.

I glanced down at Timothy.

" Well ? " I said, smiling.

" *Trains !* " he exclaimed hoarsely, with shining eyes. " And did you hear that lovely axdident right at the end ? "

"Now, darling, you really must hurry up."
"Oh, that's the snag, is it. There's a time-limit?"

Elizabeth and Jane

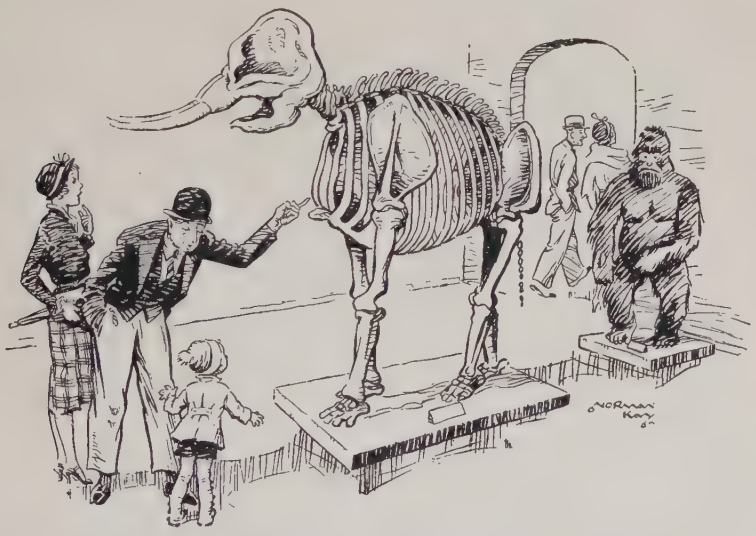
ELIZABETH is fairly good,
She does what she is told she should,
Although (as anybody would)
She thinks *her* way is best ;
But sometimes (why, she can't explain)
Elizabeth is changed to Jane,
And till she changes back again
She gives us all no rest.

For Jane, I grieve to say, is wild
And must in truthfulness be styled
A most unruly sort of child
And hardly nice to meet ;
When anything just puts her out
She throws her toys and things about
And suddenly begins to shout
And even stamps her feet.

Elizabeth runs off to bed
Directly her " Good nights " are said,
But Jane begins to play instead
And dawdles as she goes ;
She splashes in the bath until
The water wets the window-sill
And never thinks of standing still
For Nurse to dry her toes.

Elizabeth has manners too ;
She sits at meals as grown-ups do
And doesn't make remarks like " Ugh ! "
Because she knows it's rude ;
But Jane keeps bouncing in her place,
Won't eat her bread or say her Grace,
And pulls the most appalling face
At all her lovely food.

Elizabeth is quite ashamed
At all these sins that I have named,
But, as she says, *she* can't be blamed
For things that Jane does wrong ;
She says she hates becoming Jane
And tries with all her might and main
To be Elizabeth again,
But Jane's so *very* strong.



"Look, Willie! See what happened because he wouldn't eat his porridge."

THE REPTILE HOUSE AT THE ZOO

AUNT (*explaining the habits of alligators*). "No, I don't think they come out of their rivers much. They wait for people to tumble in, and then they gobble them up."

SYMPATHETIC LITTLE GIRL. "But how do the poor things manage here?"

The Collection

"YOU remember, I suppose," said Leonie, "that it's Rodie's birthday on Friday?"

Rodie is our son, aged six, and his birthday falls just two days short of Leonie's; and, to show what an unselfish nature Leonie's is, she has always warned me of Rodie's birthday, but never so much as breathed a reminder about her own. But that two days' interval sticks in the memory, and I am glad to be able to say I have never yet forgotten it.

"I've been thinking," she continued, "that he ought to start a collection."

"But, Leonie," I said, after considering this suggestion for some moments, "I gave him sixpence myself only the week before last. Surely he is not insolvent again?"

" I should hardly think so after your recent munificence," she replied. " But I was intending to suggest that he should start to collect something to give him an interest and exercise his intelligence ; and this would be a good oppor——"

" Stamps," interrupted a voice behind me.

It was Charles, my brother. I had not noticed him.

" Great educational value," he said. " Teach you a lot of geography. At least they did me. Take that place Djibouti, for instance, with the nice large stamps. Do you suppose I'd ever have heard of Djibouti if I hadn't collected stamps ?"

" Leonie," I said, " Rodie must start collecting stamps at once. It is essential that he should hear of Djibouti without any further delay."

" Where is it ?" asked Leonie, going with motherly solicitude into all the details of the case in Rodie's interests.

" Africa," said Charles in a tone that admitted no doubt on the subject— " or Asia. I forget for the moment which, but I know it's one of the two."

SMALL BOY (*returned from oculist's, showing his first spectacles to admiring little sister*). "You know, I've not got to wear them always—only for close work."
SISTER. "What do you call close work?"
SMALL BOY. "Oh—well—eating, and so on."

TEACHER. "And Ruth walked behind the reapers, picking up the corn that they left. John, what do we call that?"

JOHN (*very virtuously*). "Pinching."

SMALL GIRL (*studying her Father's "Who's Who"*). "Oh, Nannie, I'm in print."
NURSE. "Now, Miss Betty, you come and get ready for your walk."
SMALL GIRL. "But I *am* in print—'one *d*,' that's *me*."

Sparkling visions of Rodie's future rose to my mind. I saw him within a year or so from now in this very room telling our friends not only that there was a place called Djibouti, but that he knew beyond all reasonable doubt that it was in Africa—or Asia.

" And where's your collection, Charles ?" asked Leonie.

Unfortunately Charles could not place an accurate finger on his collection as he could on Djibouti. Indeed he had no idea at all where it was. He'd given it away when he left his preparatory school. (Far too many uncles give their collections away when they leave their preparatory schools. Let this be a lesson to them.)

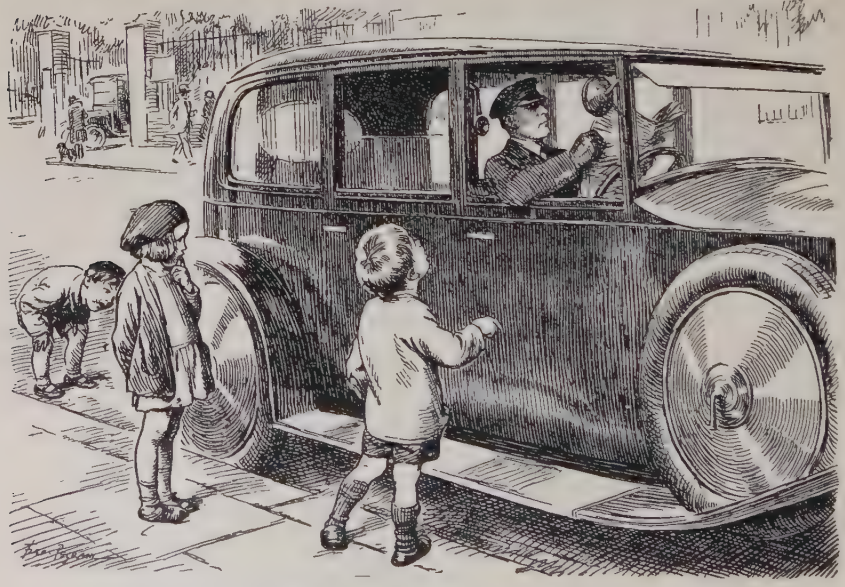
" I'm not sure after all," said Leonie, taking a book from the table, " that something in the Natural History line wouldn't be more suitable. I'm giving him this volume in the ' Hedgeside and Sedgeland ' series for his birthday, and it's got a chapter on ' Hints to Collectors.'" She opened the book at a page indicated by a marker. " There are all sorts of things you can collect, you know. You'd simply never think of them. ' Large Hymenopterons——'"

" I'd never have thought of them simply," admitted Charles.

" ' Large Hymenopterons, such as wasps, sawflies and ants, should be killed with benzine.'"

" They should indeed," I said.

" And then it goes on to tell you how to mount and preserve them."



"Move up a bit, Mister, will yer, our marble's gorn underneaf."

"I'm glad your school won, David. Did *you* play well?"
"Oh, yes, Mum. Of course I'm well known for tackling."

" Charles," I said, " what have you done with your collection of preserved wasps ? "

Charles was about to say that he'd given it away when he left his preparatory school, but Leonie cut him short.

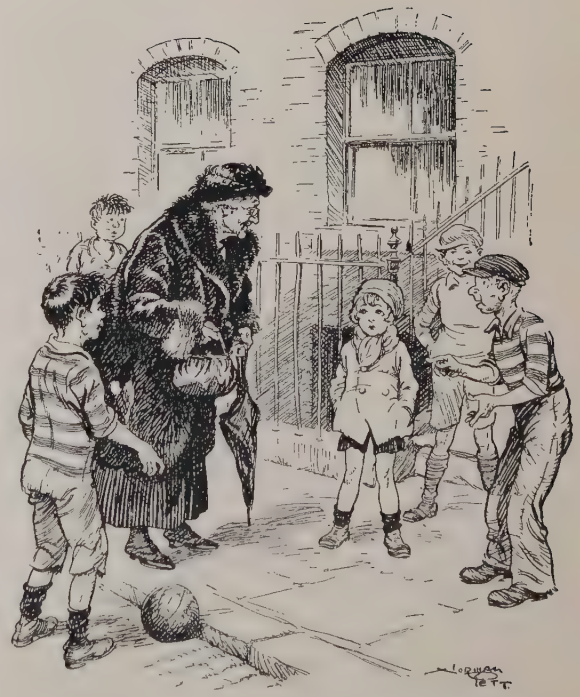
" That's just an example," she said. " I don't think on the whole they're suitable for Rodie. But there's a suggestion down here that caught my attention. ' Spiders,' it says, ' may be hunted for or taken by beating. A lively spider may be guided into a collecting-tube.' There ! "—she looked up at us triumphantly—" the very thing for Rodie ! He's always been fascinated by spiders and loves chasing them. Why shouldn't he collect them ? "

I was going to protest in no uncertain tone against the beating part of this particular hint to collectors—can it be known that our insects are subjected to this scandalous ill-treatment ?—but was prevented from doing so by an unceremonious entry on the part of Rodie himself. He came up to me and held out a small packet of cards about the size of visiting-cards, but with a picture on one side and some printed matter on the other, and uttered the one word " Look ! "

"Please, Doctor, come at once to father. Mother's taken 'is temperature an' it's gone down."

"That's all right, my dear—that's splendid."

"'Tain't all right; it's gone right down. 'E've swallered it."



OLD LADY. "And what is this darling little child doing in the team?"

CAPTAIN OF STREET-FOOTBALLERS. "When the ball goes through a winder 'e knocks at the door an' asks for it."

THE YOUNGER BROTHER (*in an awestruck whisper*). "Say, 'Orace, are you *sure* we're right for the gallery? There's a gent behind wiv spats on!"

CAPTAIN (*to hero of opposing side*). "Why didn't you play for us to-day, Billy Smiff, same as you sed you was goin' to?"

THE HERO. "Well, yer know me terms. I want fripence for a transfer fee, but it'll be a tanner soon."

I examined the cards carefully, handed them back to him and cleared my throat.

" I am happy to say that I have good news to impart to the conference," I said. " The solution of the problem has been unexpectedly provided by the Minor Power whom it more closely concerns. It is cigarette-cards."

The Minor Power at this point took up a precarious sitting position on my knee.

" Don't be silly," said Leonie. " He can't possibly collect them. It's a most vulgar pursuit. Why, all the boys in the street do it."

" That is a sentiment I am unable to endorse," I replied. " I come from a Socialist country with a Socialist Government and a Socialist Chancellor who in the unpleasant matter of debt-collecting has proved his sterling worth. Ay, and—and anyway," I concluded, fearing to take the conversation out of their depths, " what about spiders ? "

" Spider-collecting," replied the Great Power on my right, choosing her words carefully, " may not be all it might be, but one thing it is uncommon. Spider-collectors are probably a most exclusive set. And, as I said before, it

GRANDFATHER. "Any boys in your house in the eleven, Geoffrey?"
FATHER. "*Fellows*, you mean, father. Don't you know there are no *boys* in schools now?"
GEOFFREY. "There are two *people* in the eleven, and one *person* in the eight."

THE ETERNAL FEMININE

KIND OLD GENTLEMAN (*counting cherry-stones in little girl's plate*). "I see, my dear, that you're going to marry a rich man."

LITTLE GIRL. "Yes, but I had to jolly well swallow two stones to get him!"

would teach him Natural History. You don't suppose cigarette-cards are going to do that, do you ?"

I was about to request her not to ask ridiculous questions—I shouldn't have used the word " ridiculous," of course, nor " grotesque" for that matter, as they're hardly parliamentary—when the Small Power on my knee attracted my attention by handing back one of the cards to me and saying for the second time during the conversation " Look !"

I did. On one side of it was a coloured print of a large and delicately coloured moth. On the other I read aloud : ' Wayer's Cigarettes. Natural History Series, No. 5. The Convolvulus Hawk Moth (*Sphinx Convolvuli*). This handsome insect . . .'"

I read no further, but with a quiet dignity placed the card on the table and turned to the Power on my left.

" Would you care to offer any further argument in favour of stamps," I said, " before cigarette-cards are passed unanimously ?"

TOMMY (*watching delicacies being taken to invalid*). "Mummy, may I have the measles when Violet's finished with them?"

CULPRIT. "Before you begin, Daddy, I wish to say that I feel this is going to hurt *me* more than you."

HEREDITY

PLUMBER. "Ullo! Wot you back for so soon? School ain't over yet, I'll bet."

SON. "No; I've come back for my books."

"Still on the same subject?" was the reply. "No—nothing more. I merely repeat what I said at first. If a sound knowledge of geography of the sort that no other hobby provides doesn't appeal——"

"And look at this one," interrupted Rodie, handing me another card.

I looked at it and sat back amazed.

"The arguments," I said to the assembly in general, "with which the Minor Power whom the problem particularly touches meets your contentions are indeed crushing. Crushing," I repeated. "There is no other word. 'Gills' Cigarettes—Geographical Series, No. 14. Mount Vesuvius. This famous volcano——'"

A bell rang out at this point and the Minor Power was led off by his mother with commendable promptitude to bed.

It was later in the evening, when Leonie and I were alone, that she came and sat on the arm of my chair and told me in the sweetest tone that she thought I was right.

" You see, dear," she said, " for one thing it will save a lot of expense. He would always have been wanting you to buy him stamps ; and spiders, I expect, would have required a lot of expensive apparatus. Whereas now, if you just give him a cheap album for his cards on his birthday, which you will remember is on Friday, darling, he'll be as happy as a lark."

I pressed her hand.

" I'm going up to the shops to-morrow," she continued, " to look at a new dress I've heard about, but I expect it's much too expensive. Would you like me to get the album for you ? "

Isn't she wonderful ? No mention of her own birthday two days later (which I am glad to be able to say I have never yet forgotten) but making sure I shan't forget Rodie's. But I've had a wonderful idea. I'm going to buy that dress regardless of cost and give it her on her birthday. Just as a surprise.

* * * * * * *

STOP PRESS NEWS.—Rodie has just announced his decision to devote his life to the collection of shells. C. B.

LITTLE GIRL (*entering carriage with her mother and being glowered at by occupants*). "Mummy, next stop it'll be *our* turn to hate!"

THE COLD SNAP

LITTLE GIRL. "Oh, Aunty, *wouldn't* this weather be lovely on a hot day?"

BOY (*on fence of Cricket Ground*). "'Ere, don't mike such a rah—you'll git me chucked aht!"

VIRTUOUS LITTLE GIRL (*to small brother who has been punished for stealing jam*). "Well, it's entirely your own fault. Didn't your *conscience* tell you someone might be looking?"

OFFICIOUS OLD GENTLEMAN. "You shouldn't let your child cry like that, Madam. Can't you give him what he wants?"
DISTRESSED MOTHER. "Give him what he wants? He wants a ride on the rhinoceros!"

Betsinda Dances

ON a carpet red and blue
Sits Betsinda, not-quite-two,
Tracing with baby-starfish hand
The patterns that a Persian planned.
Suddenly she sees me go
Towards the box whence dances flow,
Where embalmed together lie
Symphony and lullaby.
Out of her round and silken head
Fly patterns blue and patterns red ;
She hoists her tiny self upright
And, shining-eyed, awaits delight.

Now at full speed the record spins ;
The wizard needle-point begins
(Perceptive as a blind man's finger)
To thread the secret paths where linger
The ghosts of poignant violins.
Out of a limbo black as jet
It conjures horn and clarinet ;
And spectral harp and phantom flute
And shades of oboes long since mute
It rouses, like the trump of doom,
To glory from their waxen tomb.

Then, as the tide of sound advances,
With grave delight Betsinda dances.
One arm flies up, the other down
To lift her Lilliputian gown,
And round she turns on clumsy, sweet,
Unrhythmical, enraptured feet ;
And round and round again she goes
On hopeful, small, precarious toes.

Dance, Betsinda, dance, while I
Weave from this a memory ;
Thinking, If I chance to hear
That record in some other year,
The needle-point shall conjure yet
Horn and harp and clarinet ;
But oh ! it shall not conjure you—
Betsinda, dancing, not-quite-two.

CELEBRITY (*to son home for the holidays*). "And what are these, my boy—prizes?"

SON. "No, Father; autograph albums."

ALL THE JOLLY FUN

BOY. "Look at their ticklers, Vi'let!"

MOTHER. "I hope you remembered what I told you—you didn't *ask* for anything?"

LITTLE GIRL. "No, Mother, I didn't ask, but every now and then I said, 'Crumbs! I *am* hungry!' and they gave me something on their own."

The Truth about Home Rails

IMAGINE us, if you can, sitting one on each side of the fire, I with my feet on the mantelpiece, Margery curled up in the blue arm-chair, both of us intent on the morning paper. To me, by good chance, has fallen the sporting page ; to Margery the foreign, political and financial intelligence of the day.

" What," said Margery, " does it mean when it says——" She stopped and spelt it over to herself again.

I put down my piece of the paper and prepared to explain. The desire for knowledge in the young cannot be too strongly encouraged, and I have always flattered myself that I can explain in perfectly simple language anything which a child wants to know. For instance, I once told Margery what " Miniature Rifle Shooting " meant ; it was a head-line which she had come across in her paper. The explanation took some time, owing to Margery's preconceived idea that a bird entered into it somewhere ; several times, when I thought the lesson was over, she said, " Well, what about the bird ? " But I think I made it plain to her in the end, though maybe she has forgotten about it now.

"What," said Margery, "does it mean when it says 'Home Rails Firm'?"

I took up my paper again. The Spring boks, I was glad to see, were rapidly developing into a first-class team, and——

"'Home Rails Firm,'" repeated Margery, and looked up at me.

My mind worked rapidly, as it always does in a crisis.

"What did you say?" I asked in surprise.

"What does 'Home Rails Firm' mean?"

"Where does it say that?" I went on, still thinking at lightning speed.

"There. It said it yesterday too."

"Ah, yes." I made up my mind. "Well, *that*," I said—"I think *that* is something you must ask your father."

MASTER (*after the event*). "Do you know, young man, that this pains me much more than it does you?"

THE TERROR. "No, I didn't know, Sir. But if that assertion genuinely expresses your considered opinion I feel very much better."

"I did ask him yesterday."

"Well, then——"

"He told me to ask Mummy."

Coward!

"You can be sure," I said firmly, "that what Mummy told you would be right," and I returned to my paper.

"Mummy told me to wait till *you* came."

Really, these parents! The way they shirk their responsibilities nowadays is disgusting.

"'Home Rails Firm,'" said Margery, and settled herself to listen.

It is good that children should be encouraged to take an interest in the affairs of the day, but I do think that a little girl might be taught by its father (or if more convenient, mother) *which* part of a newspaper to read. Had

SCHOOL MEDICAL OFFICER (*examining child's eyes*). "Now, little girl, can you see my finger?"
CHILD (*coyly*). "I shan't tell you."

RONALD. "Mummy, *do* speak to Eric. He *won't* forget who the lady in the picture over my bed is, so that I can tell him about her all over again, and when I say, 'Eric dear, shall I tell you who that lady is?' he says, 'Oh! I know all about *her*.' "

Margery asked me the difference between a Springbok and a Sanjak, had she demanded an explanation of "ultimatum" or "guillotine," I could have done something with it; but to let a child of six fill her head with ideas as to the firmness or otherwise of Home Rails is hardly nice. However, an explanation had to be given.

"Well, it's like this, Margery," I said at last. "Supposing—well, you see, supposing—that is to say, if *I*——" and then I stopped. I had a sort of feeling—intuition, they call it—that I was beginning in the wrong way.

"Go on," said Margery.

"Perhaps I had better put it this way. Supposing you were to—— Well, we'd better begin further back than that. You know what—— No, I don't suppose you do know that. Well, if I—that is to say, when a man—you know, it's rather difficult to explain this, Margery."

"Are you explaining it now?"

"I'm just going to begin."

"Thank you, uncle."

I lit my pipe slowly, while I considered again how best to approach the matter.

KIND OLD LADY (*to perturbed youth*). "Can I help you, little man?"
YOUTH. "Well, if you see a pasty-faced kid like a lop-eared rabbit you might tell him he'll get a jolly good hiding for giving me the slip."

DAUGHTER (*to father, who is having some difficulty in mending her bicycle*). "Haven't you finished *yet*? Oh, daddy! *don't* say you're not trying."

"'Home Rails Firm,'" said Margery. "Isn't it a *funny* thing to say?"

It was. It was a very *silly* thing to say. Whoever said it first might have known what it would lead to.

"Perhaps I can explain it best like this, Margery," I said, beginning on a new tack. "I suppose you know what 'firm' means?"

"What does it mean?"

"Ah, well, if you don't know *that*," I said, rather pleased, "perhaps I had better explain that first. 'Firm' means that—that is to say, you call a thing firm if it—well, if it doesn't—that is to say, a thing is firm if it can't *move*."

"Like a house."

"Well, something like that. This chair, for instance," and I put my hand on her chair, "is firm because you can't shake it. You see, it's quite—— Hallo, what's that?"

"Oh, you bad uncle, you've knocked the castor off again," cried Margery, greatly excited at the incident.

"This is too much," I said bitterly. "Even the furniture is against me."

BOWLER. "I'm warnin' yer. If yer stands so much in front an' I 'its yer, yer aht—see?"
BATSMAN. "Garn—never mind me; you 'it the bat. You ain't done it yet."

THE FURY (*to successful rival*). "For two pins I'd set abaht the pair of yer—you *and* yer dancin' partner."

" Go on explaining," said Margery, rocking herself in the now wobbly chair.

I decided to leave " firm." It is not an easy word to explain at the best of times, and when everything you touch goes and breaks itself it becomes perfectly impossible.

" Well, so much for that," I said. " And now we come to ' rails.' You know what rails are ? "

" Like I've got in the nursery ? "

This was splendid. I had forgotten these for the moment.

" Exactly. The rails your train goes on. Well then, ' *Home* Rails ' would be rails at *home*."

" Well, I've *got* them at home," said Margery in surprise. " I couldn't have them anywhere else."

" Quite so. Then ' Home Rails Firm ' would mean that—er—home rails were—er—firm."

" But mine aren't, because they wobble. You know they do."

" Yes, but——"

" Well, why do they say ' Home Rails Firm ' when they mean ' Home Rails Wobble ' ? "

MOTHER. "Well, really, Michael, the fog is so thick I am afraid we must give up the idea of going to the Zoo."

MICHAEL. "Oh, *Mother*, we simply *must* go. I've put it down in my diary that we *went*."

PETER (*told to write letters of thanks after his birthday*). "Please, Mummy, can't *I* write my thank letters on the telephone?"

" Ah, that's just it. The point is that when they say ' Home Rails Firm,' they don't mean that the rails *themselves* are firm. In fact, they don't mean at all what you think they mean. They mean something quite different."

" What *do* they mean ? "

" I am just going to explain," I said stiffly.

* * * * * * *

" Or perhaps I had better put it this way," I said ten minutes later. " Supposing—— Oh, Margery, it *is* difficult to explain."

" I *must* know," said Margery.

" *Why* do you want to know so badly ? "

" I want to know a million million times more than anything else in the whole world."

" Why ? "

" So as I can tell Angela," said Margery.

I plunged into my explanation again. Angela is three, and I can quite see how important it is that she should be sound on the question.

A. A. M.

ELSIE. "What's that, Daddy?"
FATHER. "A Cow."
ELSIE. "Why?"

ACQUAINTANCE. "And is your other little girl at all like this one?"
FOND MOTHER. "Oh no, she's quite a contrast to her."
ACQUAINTANCE. "How nice!"

OVERHEARD IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF ETON

SMALL BOY (*to New Boy*). "Here, you! Sock us an ice."
NEW BOY. "Can't; haven't any money."
SMALL BOY. "Oh, *that's* all right. I'll lend you some."

MOTHER. "Lucky boy, Gerald. Uncle Charles says he's going to take you to Drury Lane again this year. Well, you don't look very pleased."
GERALD. "Oh, it's very kind of Uncle and all that, but on these occasions he always behaves just like a kid."

"Don't pull pussy's tail, darling."
"I'm *not* pulling, Mummy—I'm only holding. Pussy's pulling."

Neo-Georgian Puppyhood

BERTRAM was a nice child—I admitted as much to his mother when she questioned me—but I made the unfortunate mistake of underestimating his age by about three years.

" You will find Bertram quite good company," his mother had said, excusing herself for having to leave me for a time, " and I am sure he will enjoy a chat with you—won't you, Bertram ? "

Bertram made no answer. He was reading a cycle catalogue and appeared to be engrossed.

Then his mother closed the door and it began.

" Well, my little man," I said, making my first blunder, " and what do you learn at school ? "

I led off like that because, when I was a boy, no man of mature age ever entered our house without putting his hand on my head, addressing me as a little man, groping for a shilling and inquiring what I learnt at school. And

if I failed to put my hand on Bertram's head it was due not so much to any aloofness on my part as to the plenitude and aggressive nature of Bertram's pomade.

Even so, had he lived up to the best traditions of my boyhood, he would have blushed modestly, raised his eyes and made answer, " I learn geography, history, arithmetic, spelling and reading, Sir."

But Bertram said simply, " Swatting maths."

This was a disappointment. I had reckoned on a reasonably interesting interval during which, while pretending to listen spellbound to Bertram's list of accomplishments, I would have been able to formulate my scheme of conversation. But a deathly silence followed and the next word was obviously to me.

" Very good ! " I exclaimed with simulated enthusiasm, at the same time groping for a shilling. " Very good indeed ! That's excellent. Bravo ! "

Bertram laid his book aside and was regarding me coldly. I felt the blood rush to my face.

" How do you mean ? " he asked, apparently with genuine surprise.

I am not usually nervous, but there was something about Bertram's

HOSPITAL PATIENT (*one of large family in poor district, given a glass of milk*). "How far down can I drink?"

CONDUCTOR OF PERAMBULATOR. "D'you mind if I plays in goal to-day, Nobby, so as I can keep an eye on our supporters?"

"We ain't a bit afraid, Alfy 'Iggins. Yer own fice is a lump uglier."

"I don't like this herring, Uncle. It's got too much rigging."

manner that seemed to be spoiling the conversation.

"The—er—mathematics that you mentioned," I explained lamely.

"Oh, *that*!" said Bertram. "Awful rot, you know. Shocking ass our maths master! We rag him no end."

I didn't like this at all. Not that Bertram's private opinion concerning his master hurt me—or interested me—in any way. But I felt somehow that I was losing my status; that Bertram was more or less familiar.

"Come, come," I exclaimed stoutly—"that's not the way for any little——"

"That's a birthday present for you, my boy."
"Thanks, Uncle, very much indeed. It's most kind of you in these days of financial stinginess."

" None of the chaps in our Form can stick him," said Bertram. " Have you the right time, by the way ? My watch is gone west."

I told him the time. Then, under pretence of looking through a bundle of letters, I racked my brain for the most dignified method of taking up the threads again.

" Fond of reading ? " was my next question.

Bertram shrugged his shoulders tolerantly.

" When I was your age," I went on, striving hard to establish the correct atmosphere, " I never tired of Henty and Grimm and Kingston, and all those

jolly school tales. I suppose you've read 'Eric' and 'St. Winifred's' and 'Sandford and Merton'?"

Bertram repressed a laugh.

"I've *heard* about them," he confessed off-handedly. "Rather slush, aren't they? A silly little fathead in our Form is reading 'Eric' just now. We pull his hair."

There was something so frightfully damaging about Bertram's replies that I drew off for repairs. What to say next? I narrowly escaped trying him with a riddle—the one about a herring and a half; but I caught his eye on me and congratulated myself on not having run the risk. Stamp-collecting was another theme that crossed my mind, and I was debating mentally whether it should be that or white mice or clockwork engines or cigarette pictures, when Bertram did the unexpected once more. He took the floor himself.

"Going to the match on Saturday?" he inquired easily.

I broke into a gentle perspiration. My nerve was going.

"You really shouldn't miss it," he urged, warming to his subject. "Dickson is playing outside right for the home team, and we expect to see a bit of hot scoring. If only I am able to scrape ten bob together, I'm going. Fact of the matter is——"

"Would you like a biscuit, darling?" "Yes." "If you p——?" "If you put jam on it."

"Mummy, I've just made an April fool of the mouse; I've set the trap without any cheese in it!"

He broke off short as a terrific report shook the air. Before I could recover myself, however, Bertram, laughing loudly, was standing at the window, legs straddled, hands in pockets, staring down into the street.

"That's the Thompson kid," he explained, without turning his head. "His people gave him a four h.p. Slattery-Boston for a birthday present, and he plays with it like a babe with a new toy. Not a bad outfit, mind you. Come and have a squint at it. Two-stroke, three-gear, kickstart, semi-automatic oil-feed, foot-clutch and posh speedometer. He burns the new benzol mixture and claims to get forty out of his bus on a straight road. But I *do not* like his mag. The Pater has promised *me* an outfit when I'm old enough, and I shall stick out for six h.p."

A wild desire surged up in my bosom to tell Bertram how, when I was his age, only exceptional parents bought bicycles—mere "push-bikes"—for their children. But Bertram had, in a figure of speech, got me down and was stamping on me.

Which explains why, when Bertram's mother returned presently and expressed the hope that he had kept me amused, I smiled wanly—and lied.

"What is the baby crying for, my child?"

"I dunno; 'e 's alw 'ys crying. I never came acrawst anyone wot looks upon the dark side of things as 'e does."

LADY. "But you're letting the little girl do all the singing."
BOY. "Yes, Mum, I'm 'er manager."

BENEVOLENT OLD BOY. "Would you like me to buy you a toy?"
LITTLE MOTHER. "Coo—I've been wanting one ever since I were a kid."

The Prize-Giving

SCHOOL Prize-Givings are just now drawing boys of all ages together throughout the country, and the usual playful addresses of Old Boys, Statesmen and Distinguished Parents are bringing home to our youth the importance of character as opposed to mere brains.

As the parent of a new boy I attended the prize-giving and breaking-up festivities at Muggerton College for Boys a few days ago.

General Wix, K.C.B., in presenting the prizes (I quote from a report in a local paper), said he was glad to present so many prizes to so many successful students, especially as when he was a boy he had never won a prize at all. (Laughter and cheers.) While congratulating the many clever boys who had won the prizes which he was so glad to present to them that afternoon, he wanted to say to the other boys that it was not always the cleverest boy who won the prizes in after-life. (Cheers.) When he was at Muggerton he was

MODERN CHILD. "Lost? . . . *Me!* . . . 'Op it!"

always at the bottom of his class. (Laughter.) And as far as he could remember he had always been in the bottom class. (Cheers.) In fact, as a rule he was bottom of the school. (Loud cheers.) He had been bottom of the school for four years, and they were the happiest years of his life. They would find that the men who made good in the world were generally those who began at the bottom and worked up. (Cheers.) In those four years at the bottom of the school he had learned how to handle men. That lesson had stood him in good stead in many a tight corner. He was afraid he had been a sad scamp at school. (Cheers.) He well remembered eating gooseberries in the arithmetic class. (Laughter.) But, after all, arithmetic was not everything. When it came to the real struggles of life, the times which tested a man, they would find that character weighed far more in the balance than arithmetic or algebra. Truth and Straightness—if they learned those lessons they might let the clever ones carry off the prizes. He was afraid he had often used a crib when he was at school. (Loud laughter.) But Latin

"Mummy, can't I have the skates now, because Willie can do all that just as well without them?"

OVERBURDENED MOTHER. "Come orf of that ice, will yer? You'll listen to wot I say one o' these days when yer falls in an' I ain't 'ere to say it!"

MY LADY BOUNTIFUL. "So your mother is better through taking the quinine I gave her?"

LITTLE GIRL (*doing her best to carry out instructions*). "Yes 'm. But she says she 's worse of the complaint wot you gives 'er port wine for."

and Greek had not been much of a help to him in the Great War. Nevertheless he hoped the boys would not neglect their Latin and Greek. They were a fine discipline, and discipline was what the country needed at the present time. (Applause.) There was too much laxness and slackness about. When he was at Muggerton he well remembered a small spinney behind the golf-links where he used to go on Sundays with his dear old friend, Johnny Dole, and smoke blotting-paper cigarettes. (Laughter and cheers.) He wondered if that spinney was still there. Poor old Johnny Dole ! He was a thorn in the flesh of the masters. (Cheers.) He was generally at the bottom of his class too. (Cheers.) How he hated Latin prose ! (Cheers.) He remembered a clever boy who used to do Johnny Dole's Latin prose for him. He did not know what had become of that boy, but Johnny, as they knew, was Governor of Pathay, and one of the best Governors Pathay had ever had. (Cheers.) They should be proud of men like Johnny Dole. It only showed that brains were not everything. (Loud applause.)

General Wix then asked the prize-winners to come forward, and several

pale boys approached the platform and took their prizes with evident shame. I could see that, as the papers say, they "felt their position acutely," and on their returning to their seats I noticed that in most cases the healthier boys beside them who had not won prizes pinched and kicked them or pulled their hair.

Sir Reginald Oke, Under-Secretary for Sanitation and another Old Muggerton boy, was asked by the Headmaster to present the Varley Medals for Poetry, Composition and Declamation.

Sir Reginald said (I quote again) that he was very proud to be back at the old school to present the medals for Poetry and Composition. As a member of the Government he could not say that he found much time for poetry. (Laughter.) He had something more important to do, and that was to look after the sanitation of this great country. Poetry was a good thing, but after all there was something more valuable than poetry, and that was character. (Applause.) He agreed with every word that his old friend General Wix (" Dobby," as they called him then) had said. He did not mind

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER. "Dear me, Maggie, you're not going away before the service is begun?"

LITTLE GIRL. "It's our Freddie, Miss. 'E's swallowed the collection."

FATHER (*making exit at conclusion of lecture*). ". . . So now you understand that I will not permit children of mine to behave in so unladylike a manner."
ONE OF THE GIRLS (*aside*). "2LO now closing down."

MOTHER. "Darling, why not let Mummie squash your strawberries for you? They're so much nicer like that."

MOLLIE. "Oh no, Mummie, please not. I like to taste the shape of them."

OWNER OF SOAP-BOX. "Watch this car for me, boy, an' there's a cigarette-card for yer."

revealing now that on two or three occasions they had nearly been expelled. (Loud cheers.) He and Dobby used to climb out of their house at night and go to the fair. He hoped that none of the boys did such a thing to-day. All the same, it was the spice of adventure and devilry which had made the British Empire—(Cheers)—and it was not always the goody-goody boy who came out top in the long run. He thought these special prizes for composition were a good thing, because it was very important in after-life to be able to express yourself. When he was at school he had never been able to spell. (Laughter.) Even now there were a lot of words he was not sure about. (Loud laughter.) But he had never found that this had kept him back in the race of life. Many of the Cabinet could not spell. (Laughter.) Mr. Gladstone, he believed, was ploughed for Smalls. (Cheers.) Let them learn poetry and composition by all means, but let them never forget that it was Deeds, not Words, that mattered in the end. (Loud applause, in which the Headmaster joined.) As for Declamation, they would find, if they came into public life, that a plain statement was worth any amount of oratory. Oratory was very often dishonest, and sincerity was more than syntax. The men he liked most in the House of Commons were the men who spoke least. Let them always remember the motto of the School, " Virtus non Verba." (Loud cheers.)

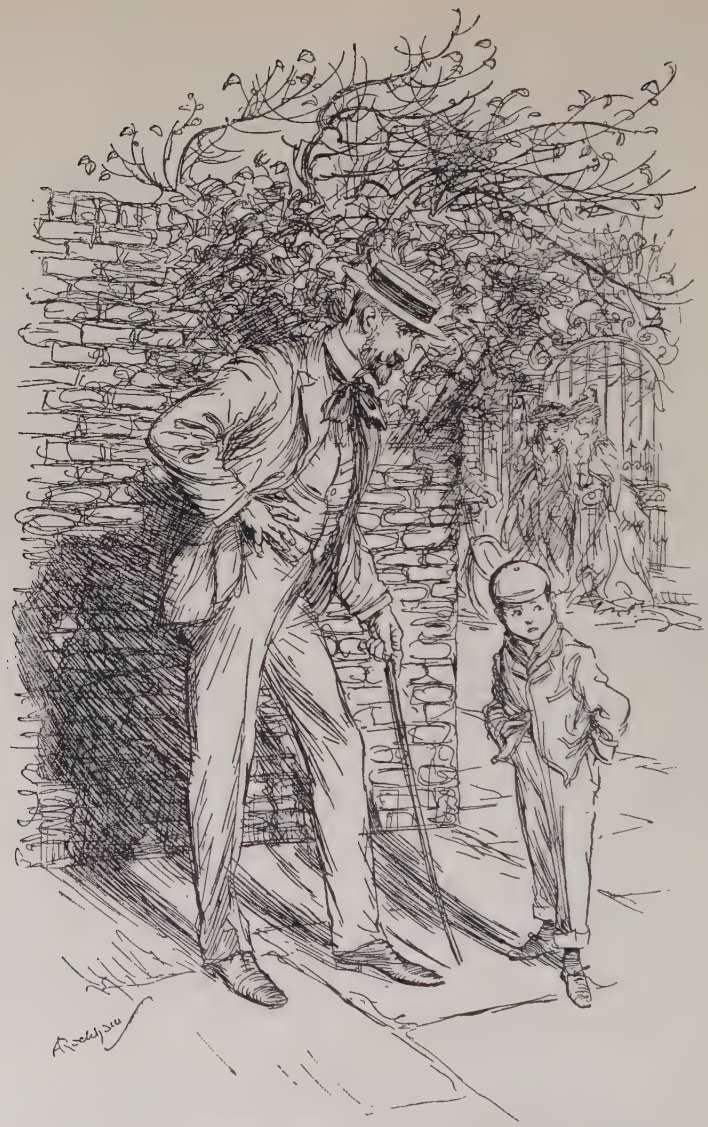
Sir Reginald then presented the Varley Medals to the three successful boys, after which they were quietly conducted outside by the Football Eleven and thrown into a pond.

The Headmaster, in thanking General Wix and Sir Reginald for their inspiring speeches, said the school was proud of them, and he hoped that the example of their lives would be taken to heart by every boy there. He was sorry to report that no scholarships had been won at Oxford or Cambridge this term, but they had great hopes of the future : a healthy and manly tone prevailed in the school, and the victory of the Soccer Team in the Stourminster Match would go down to history.

The proceedings closed with the singing of the School Song, " Out, dull scholar ! time for play ! " At the conclusion a parent near me rose and said indistinctly that he had sent his boy to Muggerton to be educated, that his boy had brains and would certainly win a prize before long, and that if for this venial offence his boy was to be treated as a moral leper he would take his boy away. But nobody paid any attention to the childish fellow.

A. P. H.

"Come on, Nobby; it's fine."
"Can't; muvver'll find out."
"No, she won't."
"Yes, she will; it's my barf-night to-night."



SMALL BOY (*to R.A., Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, etc., etc.*). "Oh, Father, if you don't mind, I think we'll turn back here. There are some of our fellows coming along and—you're all *right*, you know—but they don't like your tie!"

SCHOOLGIRL (*who is not returning to school till next day, to friend*). "Isn't it simply too ghastly to think I shall be looking something like you to-morrow?"

SYMPATHETIC LADY. "And does your arm hurt very much?"
GIRL. "No, it don't hurt a bit. It 's Billy wot 's been vaccinated. I give 'im a 'apenny to let me wear 'is ribbin."

The Rocking-horse

" IT'S awfully kind, of course,
And nice of Uncle Dick
To send his pretty horse,
But, hang it all," said Mick,
" It's precious little use
To woman or to man."
" There's simply *no* excuse—
Such *childishness !*" said Ann.

" He knows when you were born ;
He knows that I am *ten*,
And hunting with the Quorn
Two days a week. *Well, then— !*
There's nothing more to say ;
You can't give people *brains* ;
Oh, *take* the thing away—
It gives me pinny pains."

I trusted Uncle Dick,
I gave him heaps of hints,
I *showed* the chap," said Mick,
" That bike in lots of prints."
" And didn't I *suggest*
Just last week to the man
A horse-rug with a crest ?—
And look at *this !*" said Ann.

" And *for us both*—please mark—
A grown-up girl and boy !
Why not a Noah's Ark
If he must send a toy ?
It's rotten luck," said Mick,
" How rich old uncles *can*
Behave like Uncle Dick."
" The dear old ass !" said Ann.

W. H. O.

FAMILY PRIDE

"My farver would 'a' bin a copper if e'd 'ad the figure. 'E ain't ever tired o' standin' abaht."

Betty's Game

FOR five years old, I must say, Betty drives a car remarkably well. She does all the tricky bits, such as deciding when I shall hoot, keeping the engine going by rattling the door-handle, and steering with a wheel not visible to the dull eyes of grown-ups. The purely manual and unskilled part of the driving, such as working the gears and brakes and accelerator, she allows me to deal with.

One winter night Betty was driving me home after a tea with a middle-aged friend of hers, a boy of twelve. It must have been very late indeed because it was dark—in fact, it must have been close on six P.M.

Having, after ten minutes or so, got tired of driving, she proposed a game to enliven the journey.

"What game?" I said cautiously.

"Countin' lights. I'll look out vis side and you look out ve ovver, and we count lights."

"All right—er—one!" I began promptly, spotting a lighted window on my right.

"Hoo! You mustn't begin till I say 'Go'!"

I felt abashed, almost as if I had been caught cheating. There was a pause, till at last a cluster of lights swept up upon the left, whereupon Betty

SUSCEPTIBLE LITTLE BOY. "I think they're silly, these old-fashioned programmes. You get booked up; then halfway through the evening you click with somebody, and there you are—absolutely done!"

ELDER SISTER (*having had occasion to explain the day before that nice people always choose the smaller of two chocolates*). "Now, Charlie, choose."
CHARLIE. "Thank you, Maud, but ladies *always* choose first."

said " Go ! " and got up to seven all in one breath. I achieved one only. Betty already has a large share of feminine honesty.

By-and-by I said " Two."

" Eight ! " said Betty promptly, though her side was in darkness.

" Here," I expostulated, " that light was on my side ! "

" Oh yes, but I'm now countin' on vat side."

I lodged a formal protest, but it was ruled that anyone could count any lights on either side. I agreed meekly, though it seemed to me rather to reduce the element of competition. We then played steadily till Betty was twelve and I was five. I had not been able to reduce her lead because whenever I added one to my score Betty added it to hers as well without bothering to look for it, seeming quite disposed to trust my eyesight.

Seeing therefore that, if I wanted to do any good, I could not afford to be too rigidly honest, I counted the moon and made myself six.

" Firteen," said Betty mechanically, but added this time, " Where's vat one ? "

" The moon," I said stiffly. " It's a light."

" So are ve stars," countered Betty smartly. " Fourtin ! An' fiftin ! An' sixtin ! An' seventin ! An' neightin ! . . . What are you now ? I'm meightin."

HAROLD (*after a violent display of affection*). " 'Tisn't 'cos I love you—it's 'cos you smell so nice."

MOTHER (*to little girl engaged in grooming with a nail-brush a newly-born kitten*). "Oh, Maisie, I don't think that the mummy-cat would like to see you doing it that way."

MAISIE. "Well, Mummy, I *couldn't* lick it."

TEACHER. "What are elephants' tusks made of?"
SMART BOY. "Please, teacher, it used to be ivory; but now it's generally bonzoline."

" Er—I'm still six," I said humbly, feeling myself in the presence of a master mind.

" I'm winning, ven ! What comes after reightin ? "

" In conventional circles, nineteen does."

" Oh, well, I'm ninetin, ven," said Betty with the air of one who adopts that figure solely for reasons of personal preference for a nicer-sounding number.

" I didn't see any light," I ventured.

" Oh, I counted vat hay-stack."

" Are you *allowed* to count haystacks ? " I asked.

" Of course I am. You can, too, p'raps," she conceded graciously.

We settled down to wait eagerly for haystacks, moons, stars or lights to loom up in the darkness.

After a long wait of nearly forty-five seconds, Betty made a new rule, apparently by way of brisking the game up a bit.

" We can count anyfing now," she conceded.

I instantly counted two hedges, one on each side, and made myself eight. When Betty added them in too, I protested :—

" Here—I counted them first. They're the same hedges."

" No, vey're not."

Followed an intensive debate on when is a hedge not the same hedge. In the middle of it Betty saw a light and counted three for it because it was a bright light. I felt I was a mug not to have thought of that myself; but I promptly counted two ditches and three patches of grass. Betty wanted to know which patches, but while I was trying to point them out in the receding landscape she scored three more for the two headlights and the rear light of the car. Our scores were then thirteen to me and fifteen to Betty. Her reduced figure was due to an unfortunate impression that eleven came after twenty.

We at length reached our own village, with Betty at nineteen and myself at eighteen. Then I rose rapidly.

" Nineteen ! Twenty ! Twenty-one ! Twenty-two ! Twenty-three ! Twenty-four ! Twenty-five ! " I counted out loud. " I 'm twenty-five, twenty-five ! What are you ? "

" Twenty-six," said Betty coolly, who had forgotten her own score but knew that twenty-six was better than twenty-five.

I concealed my annoyance at this new style of play of hers and ran rapidly up to thirty-one.

SMALL BOY (*excitedly to teacher who is explaining a picture of Britons contesting the landing of the Romans*). "Please, Miss, which is our side?"

"Mummie, this bird-bath is no use at all. They simply *won't* let me bath them."

" Firty-two," said Betty.

I saw her, and raised her to thirty-four.

" Firty-five," said Betty, and I began to suspect her of being a poker-player.

" Thirty-seven," I said in desperation as we approached home.

" Firty-eight," remarked Betty, adding rapidly and for no visible reason as we turned in at the gate, " Firty-nine ! Forty-nine ! Fifty-nine ! Sixty-nine ! Seventy-nine ! "

This was too much for me. I told myself that I *would* win. I surveyed our orchard and the neighbouring wood, containing at least a hundred trees, and mentally made myself a hundred-and-thirty-seven as we stopped outside the garage.

" Game's over," I said. " What are you ? "

" I'm meighty-free," announced Betty, *splendide mendax*. " What are you ? "

" Oh, I'm a hundred-and-thirty-seven," I said casually.

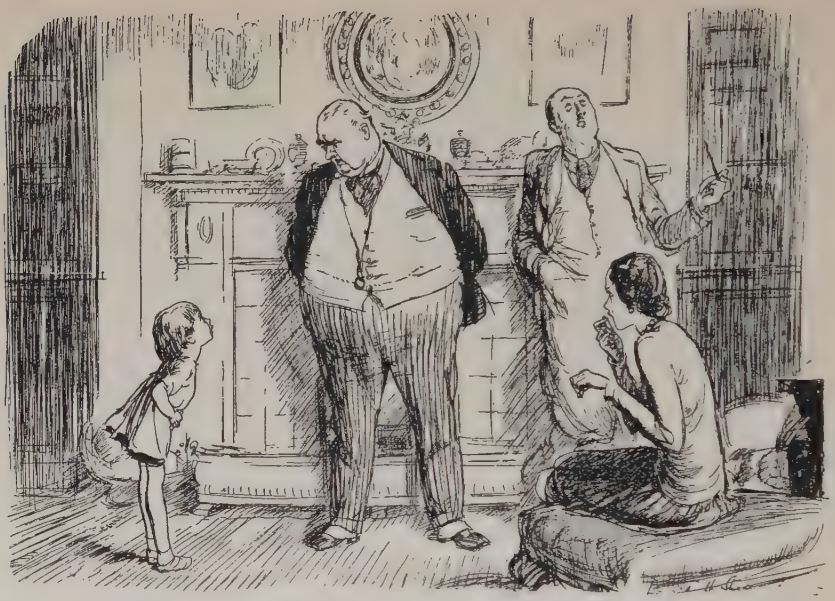
" Oh, well," said Betty, " I fink I'll be vat instead of you, and you can be my eighty-free. So I've won. What's the prize goin' to be ? " A. A.

AFFABILITY

"What's for you, Missie?"
"I forget its nime—but it's a pint o' wot it smells like."

GIVEN AWAY

BOY. "Mother, we oughtn't to be in this carriage, ought we? It's first-class."
MOTHER. "Oh, darling, you mean we ought to be economising in war-time?"
BOY. "But, Mother, we *are* economising, aren't we? We've only got third-class tickets."



SMALL GIRL (*suddenly, to influential relative*). "Why do you stand like that? Mummy always tells me to keep my tummy *in*—like this."

The Little Story

"AN' now what do we do?" Janet inquired, having found that the villainy of Long John Silver became too exhausting if you carried it beyond the limits set by its creator.

"Somebody ought," John said—"somebody ought to tell somebody a story. That is," he went on politely, "unless you can't stop to play any longer?"

"She *can*," Janet said emphatically; "I know she can. Can't you?" With a little wriggling movement she nestled against me. "Just a little while?"

"Just a short while," I agreed. "Just long enough for a little story. But who tells it? I told one last time."

"I know," John cried excitedly, with the air of having discovered a lovely new game. "Whoever thinks of one first! Now, everybody think! Ready . . ."

"I've thought," said Janet at once, with calm dreaminess.

She turned her small face in our direction. Her hair, which was supposed

SMALL DAUGHTER OF THE HOUSE (*raiding the parental whisky during youngsters' party*). "Sorry, old things, but we must keep the band going."

to be bobbed, hung in a queer mazed mass round her face. The curious green eyes had a dim cold look like a mermaid's—a blind look, as though things present appeared in a different form to her.

"Cheating!" declared John. "You couldn't have thought so quick—not all of it, I mean. I'd only just thought 'Once upon a time.' You're going to tell a silly old book one about goblins or something."

She turned the unseeing, dim look on him. "You tell lies," she stated calmly. "I'm ready, so I'll begin now. It's a very little one."

John sniffed, and elaborately examined the structure of a piece of string from his pocket.

"This story," Janet went on, "isn't the once-upon-a-time kind. It was quite lately."

John sniffed again.

"And anybody," she continued in the same thoughtful narrative-voice, "needn't listen if they don't want to, because I don't listen when they sniff. And so this story happened not very long ago. And it is about a—a Person. And this Person knew a lot of nice things—nicer than the things other people know about, like how you do sums, and who got on the throne next when the

BETTY (*indignantly*). "Look, Mummy, a gempl'um 's tooked Fleddy's hoop!"

MOTHER (*to little girl just back from party*). "Did you remember to say, 'I've had a very nice time; thank you so much for having me'?"
LITTLE GIRL. "Yes, Mummy, but I shorted it. I said, 'Thank you. I've been vewy nicely had.'"

kings were dead. But this Person knew lovely things, like soft things hiding in the dark, and fairy things, and she knew how to think of what music made you think of, but she—I mean the Person—didn't like people much because they were so silly. So one night there was a Fairy-thing that sang at the bottom of the garden, soft as anything, all by herself, and she sang, ' Person, Person, come out here.' And so the Person got out of bed and went downstairs and wasn't a bit frightened, not even a little bit. And then she walked down the garden, and the Person's feet felt lovely on the cold grass. And so the Person came to where the Fairy-thing was, and walked quite slowly and didn't have to run, being so unfrightened. And the Fairy-thing said, ' Would you like to be a fairy ? ' and the Person said, yes, she would, because people were so silly. So the Fairy said, ' What'll you give me if I make you into a fairy ? ' So the Person thought and said, ' When I was coming down the stairs just now, not a bit frightened, there were six little bits of moonlight on the stairs, and you can have them.' So the Fairy said, ' That'll do beautifully.' So the Person went back and got the six pieces of moonlight, and brought them down, and carried them all shining in her hands to the bottom of the garden."

Janet paused ; her eyes flickered slowly, and she rubbed her fingers

TEACHER (*showing picture of Adam and Eve during Scripture Lesson*). "What do we learn from this picture?"
BRIGHT BOY. "Eat less fruit."

together as though feeling something.

" All shiny in her hands," she continued slowly. " All shiny and silky," she said suddenly, as though her fingers had prompted her.

" And so the Fairy made her into a fairy, made the Person into a fairy. And the Person said : ' Thank you very much,' and the Fairy said : ' Not at all,' because she had nice manners. So the Person, now that she was a fairy, flew up all amongst the silvery air to the window and got in that way and went to bed."

Janet paused again.

" It's much nicer than the ordinary way," she said dreamily. At last she sighed and went on. " And the Person got up in the morning and everybody thought she was a Person still. They did really. It felt awfully nice being different when people thought you weren't. And the Person kept laughing to herself like anything all day ; it was so funny their thinking she was just an ordinary person."

She stopped and then said quickly : " That's the end."

" It's as stupid as stupid," John said. " I know a *much* nicer one."

" And nobody," Janet said, " knows who the Person was. Nobody," she repeated invitingly.

" What a pity," I said. " Not anybody ; no one at all ? "

" Well, I know."

" Do tell us."

" I'll whisper, but John is silly, so he mustn't know." She put her arms round my neck and pressed her shadowy face against my ear. Like the breath of delicate fairy laughter came her voice—" It's me ! "

LITTLE BOY (*pointing to unfortunate skater who has just crashed through ice*). "Now you can get a good look at them, Mummy—that's the kind of skates I want."

CHILD (*tired of monotonous breakfasts*). "Mummy, I do wish the hens would lay something else 'sides eggs."

LITTLE GIRL (*sent to make purchases for small brother*). "Please, have you any bow-legged stockings?"

SMALL BUT OBSERVANT NATIVE. " 'Erbie—quick! This is 'ow 'e done it. I watched 'im."

Tick, Tock

TICK, Tock, said the clock,
Time to go to bed.
Half-past seven, Drowsy-eyes,
Good night, Nod-a-head!
Up you get and off you go,
And fold your clothes up nicely,
Wash your hands and brush your hair
And kneel and say a sleepy prayer,
And you'll be tucked in bed, I know,
At ten-to-eight precisely.
Then what loveliness you'll find
Waiting for your coming,
Fairies merry, fairies kind,
Tiny nests of fairy birds
Singing songs with pretty words,
Meadows full of flowers and trees,
Gay-winged butterflies and bees
With their drowsy humming.

And the lucky child who comes
Finds—I tell you true—
A little house of sugar-plums
With barley-sugar window-panes
(They melt a little when it rains)—
It may be all for you.
The roof is made of caramel,
The walls are ginger-bread.
Tick, tock, said the clock,
Time to go to bed.

And there are joys I may not tell
If you go by bridge and stream
In that kingdom of a dream,
And watch the spraying waterfalls
And hear the fountain-fairies' calls,
And see the water-lilies lie
Delicate and pale
In their secret pool of green,
Beautiful and shy.

But if we ask you where you've been
You cannot tell us all you've seen,
No matter how you try;
We may not hear the wonder-tale
Of where your wanderings led,
For over all a gauzy veil,
A magic cloak is spread.
Tick, tock, said the clock,
Time to go to bed.

"Great Scott, Eric! Look—Quick! Handles!!"

NURSE. "Little gentlemen, Master Eric, leave the last mince-pie to their sisters."

GENEROUS LITTLE GIRL. "O, Nurse, do let him be a little cad."

Excelsior: The Higher Education

THIS is a dangerous season. Let all men (especially uncles) beware. Let them benefit by my experience. Once again I have walked unsuspecting into the cunningly-baited trap.

> DEAR HENRY [wrote Pamela's mother]—what ages it is since we have seen you. Why don't you come down and spend a few days with us in this delightful September weather? Bring your golf-clubs, of course. [Then came the real bait.] Pamela is dying to see you. You know how the child dotes on you, and she has only a week more holiday.

I ought to have been warned in time. That week, that fatal last week of the summer holidays! A year ago, I now recall, it was merely a General Knowledge paper. I rather distinguished myself over that. My mind is a storehouse of unreliable information, and my profession has given me a fatal plausibility. Both Pamela and Pamela's mother had listened open-mouthed as I rattled off item after item. I was careful not to inquire about the results.

The year before that, Pamela was in the Kindergarten (or its modern equivalent). The poor mite was given the fantastic task of constructing a model of Saint Benedict in his hermit's cell. Both she and her mother were on the verge of a nervous breakdown when I arrived. But in the end we had great fun over old Benedict. I had a vague idea that the sainted man was a great lover of animals; if it wasn't Benedict it was someone else. Having stimulated our imaginations with a visit to the Zoo, we peopled the monk's cell with a truly noble menagerie of animals, including a most realistic stuffed rat. I was told by Pamela's mother that the unfortunate schoolmistress nearly fainted away when the lid of the cell (a large soap-box) was lifted by the enraptured Pamela, to display the Saint seated amongst his revolting pets. But that is ancient history, and anyway the woman deserved it.

"Pamela has to write a poem," announced Pamela's mother as I sank into an armchair after an excellent dinner. "I do hope you are going to help her again."

The duplicity of women! I ought to have smelt the conspiracy a mile off.

MOTHER. "Now, Billy, say grace after your breakfast."
BILLY. "Fanks for my b'ekfast."
MOTHER. "Oh, Billy, that wasn't much of a grace."
BILLY. "Well, it wasn't much of a b'ekfast."

LADY (*leaving children's dance, to small girl*). "We're having a little dance on Wednesday, and we should be so glad if you would care to come."

SMALL GIRL. "Right-o! Would you like me to bring a man?"

SMALL BOY. "Dad, I wonder if you could change some money for me?"
FATHER. "I daresay I could, my boy. What is it you want changed?"
SMALL BOY. "I was wondering if you could change me a penny for tuppence?"

PROSPECTS FOR THE SEASON

MOTHER (*to "Hope of his Side"*). "Ah! Got a cold in your 'ead—I thought as much. Never let me catch you playin' cricket again without your overcoat on!"

"You know what it is," she continued apologetically. "The great idea nowadays is to let children express themselves."

I expressed myself fluently but without avail.

The next day was wet, and at ten-thirty precisely Pamela presented herself with a large exercise-book and a bright smile.

"It's awful rot, Uncle Harry," she said. "I've got to write a foul poem about the country or something."

So that's how children "express themselves" nowadays!

"I see," I said. "Have you any ideas about it?"

She stood on one foot for an embarrassed moment. "I'd like it to be like 'Excelsior,'" she suggested timidly.

Who was I to check the creative impulse? "How many verses ought there to be?" I asked.

"Oh, four will do. That's what Miss Murray said."

"Very well. You shall write the first two lines of each verse and I'll write the next two, and then we'll stick on 'Excelsior' at the end."

"What will the first verse be about?" she asked.

"A skylark," I replied.

Pamela's opening two lines, after fifteen minutes' concentrated thought, were highly creditable :—

It was the early dawn, and hark
I thought I heard a little lark.

I added :—

Mother's voice goes very high,
But oh ! the skylark in the sky !
Excelsior !

" Capital ! " I said. " Now for verse two—about a pig-sty."
Pamela, warming up, soon produced

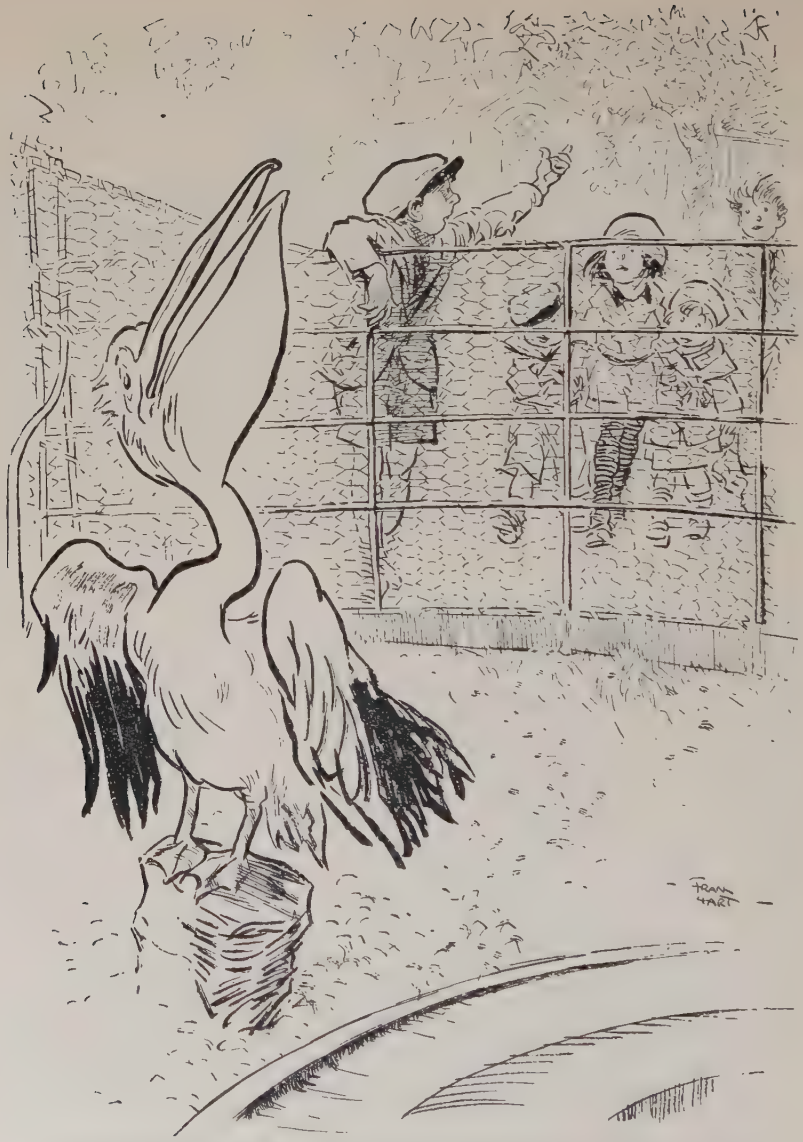
I went to see a little pig,
And with his nose he loved to dig.

All Pamela's birds and beasts are agreeably diminutive.
I added :—

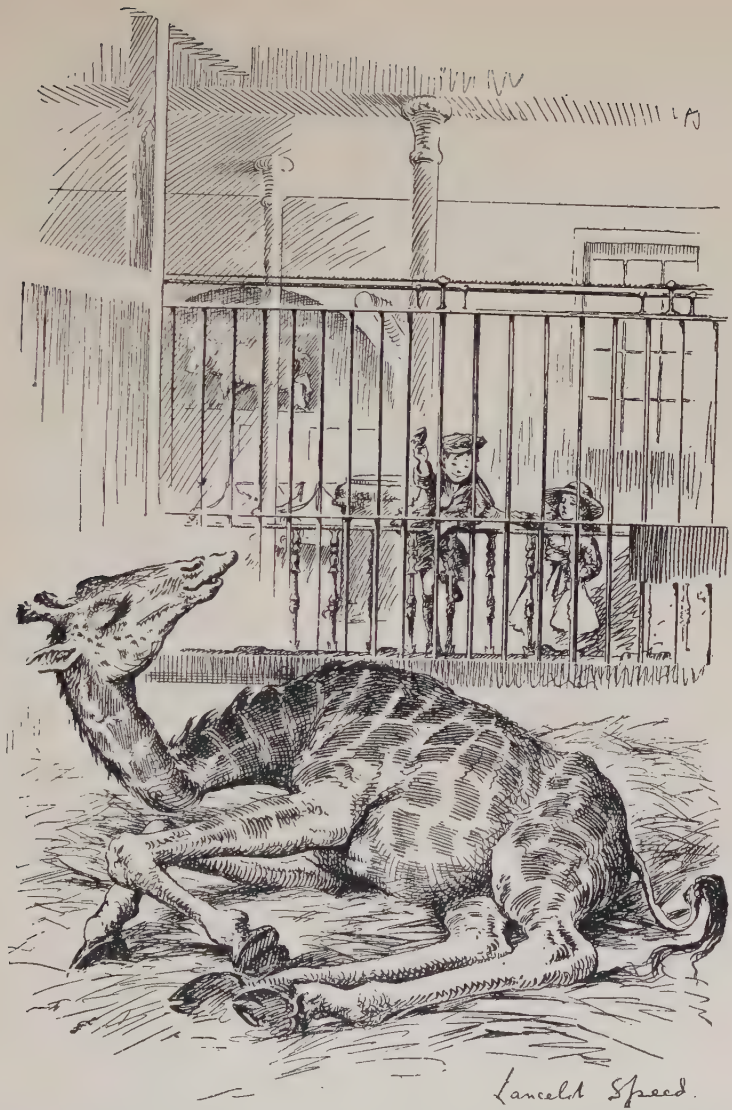
Stilton cheese is sometimes high,
But oh ! the pig within his sty !
Excelsior !

" A little coarse," I commented, " but the country has its earthy side and

MODERN BOY (*fascinated by costume of old-fashioned hostess*). "Mother, hasn't she got any legs?"



" 'Orace! Maudie! Alfie! Rose! Come and look at this old swan—'e ain't 'arf got a ficeache!"



GWENDOLINE. "'E ain't agoin' to get up for no bun. 'E'd 'ave such an orful lot of up to get."

we can't neglect that. Now for a touch of spirituality. Verse three—the village church."

A difficult subject, but Pamela stuck to it nobly. Eventually she showed me

> The village church is rather nice,
> I've been to see it once or twice.

The exigencies of rhyme had caused a slight reflection on her religious upbringing, which is really excellent. I remembered the Anglo-Catholic tendencies of the Vicar, and added :—

> Proudly soars the splendid spire,
> But oh ! I think the parson's higher !
> Excelsior !

So far so good, but anything after the village church would be rather an anticlimax. We were still thinking when Pamela's mother came in.

" I'm afraid," she said, " that the poem's rather a bother. It's all the fault of the Higher Education."

The Higher Education !

" Put in something nice," she suggested, " about going back to school. Miss Murray would like that."

Pamela was not enthusiastic, but we set to work. Pamela's school is called

LIFE'S LITTLE ANOMALIES

How many thousands of pounds have been offered to Carpentier and Dempsey to fight, and now here is a kind old lady giving two boys sixpence each if they 'll promise *not* to.

St. Margaret's High School. She produced this grudging and dubious tribute :—

St. Margaret's is nice and slack,
I really don't mind going back.

I added :—

It's called a high school, I know why,
The education there—my eye !
Excelsior !

Pamela was delighted with the poem. She knows it off by heart. I hope Miss Murray will enjoy it.

FIREWORKS FOR THE FIFTH

1s. Box. 5s. Box. Guinea Box. Five-guinea Box.

"A cotton manufacturer said to me not long ago: 'Children to-day don't learn things at school as well as they did when I was a boy. When I was a lad we had to learn, and if anybody had wakened me up in the middle of the night and said, "What's twelve nines?" I should have said straight off, without thinking, "96."'"—*Trade Periodical.* A nasty one for the Board of Education of that day.

We hear that a mass meeting of children is being organised by Our Little Chicks' League to protest against the threatened rise in the price of cigarettes.

A daily paper points out that plum-pudding is very unhealthy. Smith Minor says he will be only too glad to put it out of its misery.

"'Cigarette coupon'! What do you want with a cigarette coupon?"
"I only wants anuvver 'undred-an'-ninety-six to git a real levver meroccer 'andbag."

"What are you doing in my orchard?"
"If you please, Ma'am, I just came to see if you would lend me a few apples."

Jones, after fishing for a week, at length has luck—for him

AFFABLE LITTLE STRANGER. "Oh, I say! How splendid!! Or—or is it *Bait*?"

Smith Minor on his Favourite Town

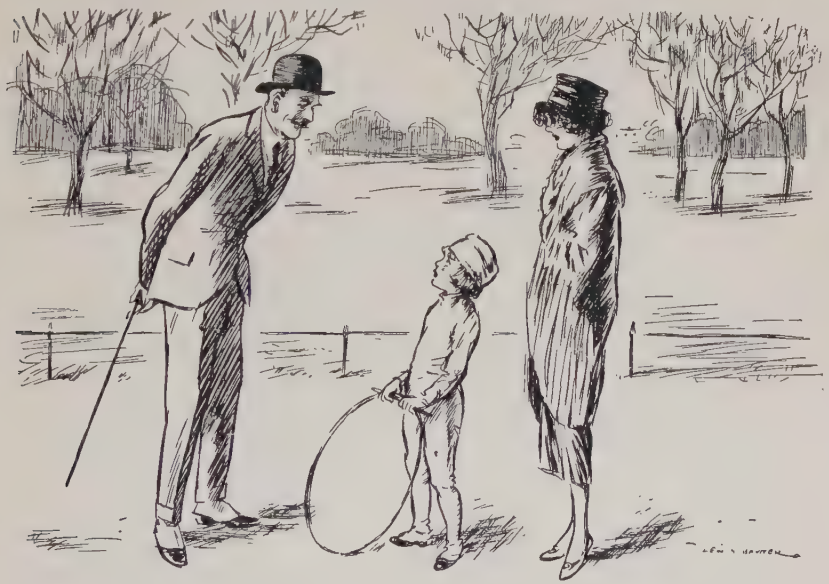
WE have been told to write about our favourite town in Great Britain, and my favourite town in Great Britain is Ecclefechan which has a population of 670 souls in my encyclopædia and gave birth to Thomas Carlyle who is considered to be a well-known writer. It is not really a town but a village though it is pretty sure to be a town before long at the rate they are building now-a-days.

Ecclefechan is not my favourite town because it gave birth to Thomas Carlyle but because it produces men who can stand up and speak out for and on behalf of great causes which is what we expect from a British town but do not always get. The papers have recently described a man who cared enough for great causes to stand up in Ecclefechan and say that having baths is unnecessary. He said that he had not had a bath for 10 years and he said he had a friend who was 90 years old and who had not had a bath since his mother washed him which is even more interesting and instructive. This

must be true because he is a Parish Councillor, the first man is, I mean, not his friend.

Even if we allow for a chap being washed by his mother up to 10 years of age which is giving a handsome margin then this other man has not had a bath for 80 years which shows it must be healthier not to have baths than to have them because no end of people who have baths once a week do not live anything like so long. So that it is foolish to say that cleanliness is an aid to health as so many doctors and advertisements say now-a-days. I spoke to my mother and she said ah but if his mother had not washed him for 10 years he would probably have died young, but I do not see how she can prove that, and anyway she is a bit prejudiced about soap and water like most women, especially mothers, that being what naturalists call the maternal instinct which is characteristic of the female sex and cannot be cured.

It would be interesting and instructive to take all the baths which that man has not had for 80 years and put them end to end and see where they would reach to but space does not permit me to do that. We can however see at a glance what an enormous amount of soap and water and wear and tear of sponge, flannel and other accessories he must have saved in all that



"And how do you like your new brother?"
"Not much. He takes up all Mummie's and Nannie's time."
"Why don't you send him back again?"
"I'm afraid we can't. You see, we've used him."

FARMER'S WIFE (*to visitor*). "Now, Johnny, will you go and collect the eggs, and don't take the china ones. I suppose you know what they're for?"

JOHNNY. "Oh, yes; they're for a pattern to show 'em how to make the others."

time, not to mention feeling much better for it.

Then let us take the case of the first man, the man who stood up in Ecclefechan and said he had not had a bath for 10 years. I think clergymen would say this case has a moral aspect because it does not only mean that the man was hale and hearty through not having had a bath for 10 years. We must remember that he was a Parish Councillor which means that not having baths must have been good for his brains because in Scotland where Ecclefechan is pleasantly situated they would not make a man a Parish Councillor unless he had some sense. My father says that the Scotch do not keep people if they have no brains, they send them to London and the House of Commons.

I think I have shown that not having baths is good both for body and brain and so it is quite clear that the more we can banish the foolish custom of having baths and forcing our sons and daughters to have baths the more we shall benefit the human race, except soap-makers, and they could easily be told to make something more sensible—sausages for example.

A good deal more could be written on this very interesting and important topic but I think I have said enough to show why Ecclefechan is my favourite town.—SMITH MINOR.

D. C.

BOY (*to famous local three-quarter*). "Wot! you don't remember *me*, Guv'nor? I'm the boy wot give yer a bit o' lemon at 'arf-time larst Saturday."

BOY. "Please, teacher, what did I learn to-day?"
TEACHER. "That's a peculiar question."
BOY. "Well, they'll ask me when I get home."

TEACHER. "Your essay is very good, but it's the same as Johnson's. What shall I conclude from that?"
PUPIL. "That Johnson's is very good, too."

Miss Smith, Authoress

OUR youthful daughter, Eve, is now an authoress. Her first composition has been discovered to-day tucked among her handkerchiefs. Oddly enough Irene takes a somewhat serious view of the production, but it occurs to me that mothers have not that sureness of touch (in relation to daughters, I mean) which fathers have. Here is the story :—

THE FAREY PRINCE

Once there was a very butiful and good little girl named Eve——

(At this point the authoress appears to have paused to consider whether it was strictly desirable to disclose the identity of this beautiful girl to a prying world, and to have decided, wisely, I think, that it was not. She had therefore put her pen through " Eve" and written " Miss Smith.")

Once there was a very butiful and good little girl named Miss Smith. And she was trying to do her speling one day when a farey prince came in sudnly and sat down beside her.

I say he said you look wurrid is the speling very hard.

Orful said the butiful Miss Smith.

As it was

"Papa,. I'm exceedingly sorry, I fear I've broken the Christmas gift you gave me."

As it is

"John, I'm awfully sorry, I'm afraid I've broken the Christmas present I gave you."

I say he said looking over the book they shorely don't spect you to spel words like spinnitch do they.

(Once more the authoress had paused, this time evidently to consult her book, because " spinnitch " was struck out and " spinach " inserted.)

They do said the butiful girl and harder words to.

Well its a shame said the prince what they spect girls to do nourdays how would you like one of my speling chocklates.

What ever is a speling chocklate cried the butiful Miss Smith sprised.

One that makes you able to spel any word there is said the prince taking a box out of his poket.

Oo cried Miss Smith joyfely thats the thing I shood like best in the hole world. Ive orfen wondered wether there were such things.

So the prince gave her one and she eat it and it was carramell inside and taisted lovely. Shall I reely be able to spel any word there is, she said joyfely.

You will said the prince and you dezerve it because you are good as well as butiful.

It *will* sprise peeple, said the butiful Miss Smith who was very happy now and not sad. Miss Tucker my teacher will be most feerfely sprised and the other girls will wunder how it hapnd. I spose you havent got any jography chocklates have you I dont reely mind if you havnt becos speling is my worst lesson.

I havnt got any with

CHILD (*given a slice of his Mother's jam-tart*). "Mummy, must I use a fork, or may I hold it by the wood?"

me said the prince but if you will promis to marry me I'll bring some next week.

The butiful Miss Smith was rather sprised at the prince becos she reely hadnt knone him very long but of corse he coodnt help falling in love with her so she promist to think about it and praps marry him when she was older. And he was ever so pleezed and said he shood orfen pop in, and bring her diffrent kinds of chocklates.

And next day Miss Smith spelt a word of fifty sillables and Miss Tucker fainted in the class and all the other girls were struck dum. And she lived happily ever afterwards.

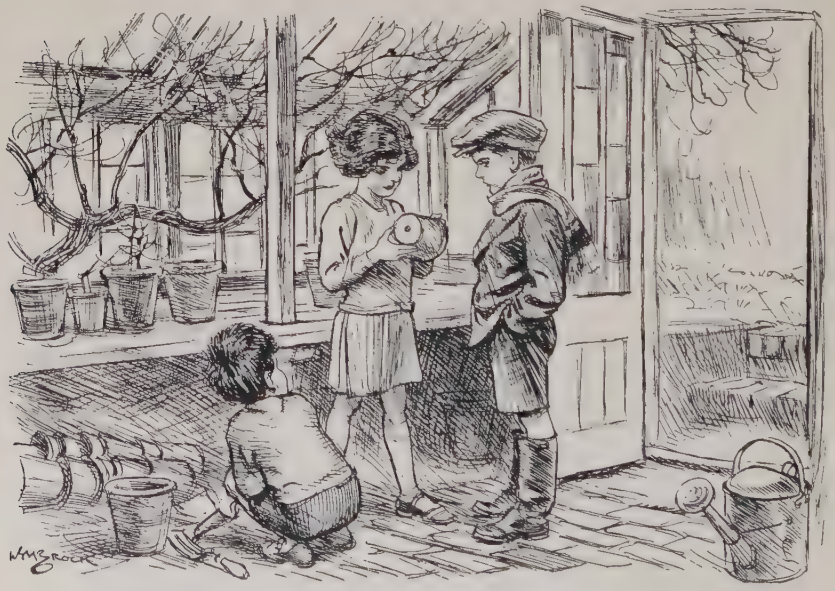
" Charming," I said, returning the manuscript to Irene ; " the child clearly inherits her father's——"

" Charming ! " interrupted Irene ; " but surely this persistent dwelling on a fancied beauty ought to be checked ? "

" Pooh ! " I said, " that's just Romance."

" At any rate the spelling is simply——"

" Ah ! perhaps there is room for a slight improvement there," I agreed. " Eve never has been able to get the hang of it somehow ; it will come suddenly, I expect."



"Why is there a hole at the bottom of each flower-pot?"
"That's in case the bulb is put in the wrong way up."

"Mummy, are niggers like lobsters? 'Cos I've found out about lobsters. They're black till they're boiled."

" It is disgraceful for a child of eight," persisted Irene, " and when you go up to say ' Good night ' I suggest you have a serious talk with her about it."

" Oh, certainly," I said.

" Serious, mind you."

" Of course."

" You lack firmness with Eve, you know."

" A perfectly unnecessary remark," I said coldly.

* * * * * * *

The light was still in the bedroom when I went up a minute later, and to my surprise I found my daughter reading in bed.

" Hallo ! " I cried, " story-reading in bed ? "

And then I noticed it was a spelling-book she held and that a tear was quivering on the rosy cheek. Good heavens, why was it these confounded schools insisted on children learning to—— I mean, why was it these confounded schools didn't teach—— Anyhow, why was it they made my little Eve cry ?

" Is the spelling very hard ? " I asked softly, seating myself on the bed.

" Oh, Daddy, it's awful," she quivered.

SIX-YEAR-OLD. "I say, Grannie, I think you'd better stop making my Trousers. Lots o' times to-day I wasn't sure whether I was goin' ter school or comin' 'ome."

"Cheer up," I said; "it will come to you all at once, I expect; some things do, you know."

"I try so hard," she murmured.

What the child needed, it was perfectly clear to me, was encouragement, not a lecture. How was it to be done? It came to me in a flash. "Ha! Ha!" I cried; "here's a prize for a girl who can spell a hard word: a nice new shilling. Let's see; what word shall we have? I know—'spinach.' Spell 'spinach.'"

I thought it was a certainty, especially as a gleam of recollection flashed in her eyes. Then slowly she spelt it out—"S-P-I-N-N-I-T-C-H."

I coughed. "Good," I said; "I'll leave the shilling on the dressing-table."

And now I'm going to potter in the garage; if I go back to the drawing-room Irene will be sure to ask a lot of irrelevant questions.

C. M.

Arithmetic

TEACHER. "How many Commandments are there, Sally?"
SALLY. "Please, Teacher, ten."
TEACHER. "Suppose you were to break a Commandment . . ." (*impressive pause*).
SALLY. "Then there'd be nine."

"This proves what I've always maintained; parents are precisely the people who ought not to have children."

The Glutton

HE'D had his longed-for train; a gun;
A top that sang aloud when spun;
An aeroplane, a lovely one,
That almost seemed alive;
Of other Yuletide gifts a score—
Games, books that bulged with nursery lore;
Not bad, you might conjecture, for
A tiny man of five.

His fill he took of Christmas fare,
Leaving inside no inch to spare;
And, while there was a pensive air
At night about the kid,
It struck us as extremely rum
That such an inexperienced tum
Could keep its equilibrium
After the work it did.

You'd think, I say, he'd had enough;
I did, and caught a swift rebuff,
For boys are made of sterner stuff
In many ways than men.
Next day this undefeated lad
Said in a wistful tone and sad,
"How long is it to Easter, Dad,
And what do we get then?"

DOUGLAS. "Oh, Daddy! would you put these in your twouser-pwesser for a bit? I'm going out to tea this afternoon."

Orange and Apple Politics

I WAS sitting in the garden when I became aware of Podgy McSumph's sturdy little figure standing at my gate. He was eating an apple. I called him, and he came in and sat down beside me.

"You haven't been to see me for a long, long time, Podgy," I said reproachfully.

"I couldn't hae come to see ye last nicht," said Podgy, "because I was busy wi' the Tories."

"The Tories, Podgy?"

"I hae to go to the Tories on the Tuesdays," said Podgy, "because I'm a member."

He took a card from his pocket and held it out for my inspection. The card certified that Podgy's name had been entered on the membership roll of the Auchterbrose Conservative Association, Juvenile Branch.

I was impressed. It seemed to me a wonderful thing that the Party organisation should extend to the inclusion of a kindergarten section.

MOTHER. "How do you like my permanent wave, Bobby?"
BOBBY. "What did you have it done for?"
MOTHER. "Oh, well, it saves bother, for one thing."
BOBBY. "Couldn't I have one done, Mother—and a permanent wash at the same time?"

"Well, Mums, better news this time!"
"Darling, I'm so glad. You've passed at last?"
"Well, not exactly passed, but I'm top of those that failed."

" And when did you join the Tories, Podgy ?" I asked.

" It was Mr. Pinkerton that came to the hoose," said Podgy, " and my mither said I was to get goin' if I was hame in time for my bed. Ye pay yer penny an' ye get yer ticket, an' then ye're a member."

" And what do you do at the Tories, Podgy ?"

" We've not to eat nothing that's not within the Empire," replied Podgy glibly. " It's Mr. Pinkerton that speaks to us. He's got a terrible squeaky voice. Maggie Stoorie gies us fun aboot him." He threw the core of his apple away. " That's my Baldwin's Bunkum feenished," he announced.

" Your what, Podgy ?"

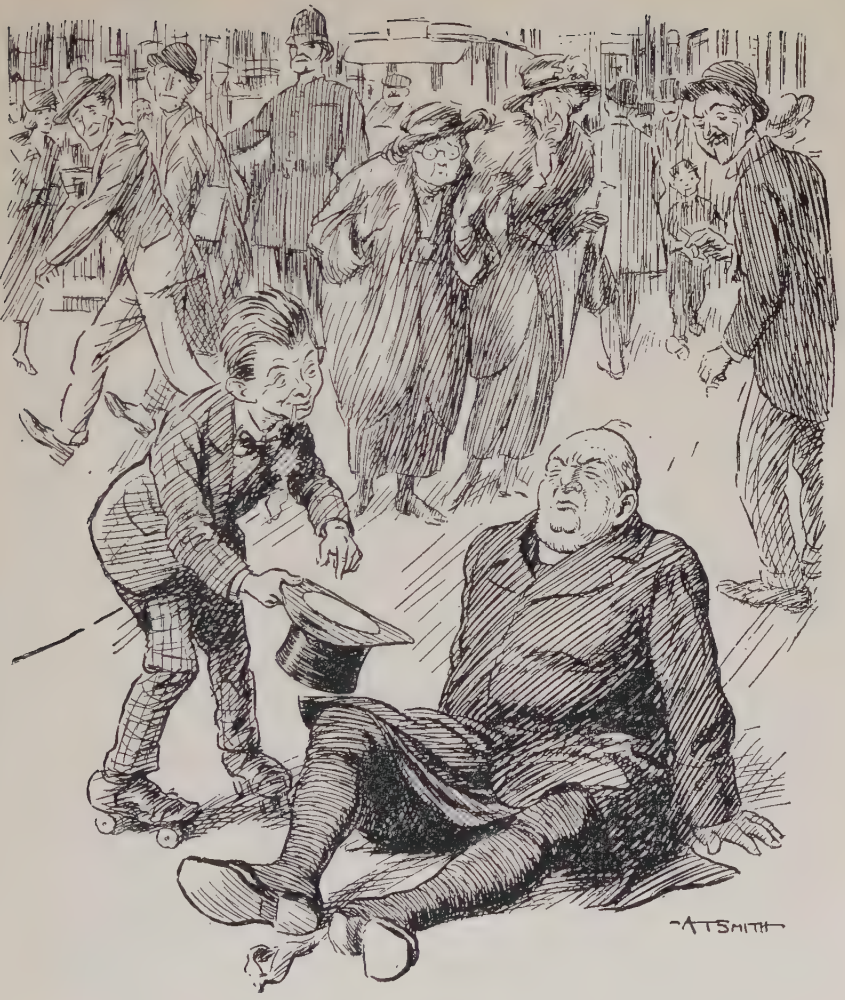
" It was Comrade Bawl," explained Podgy. " Maggie Stoorie told him the Tories was givin' us apples, and Comrade Bawl said it was just some more of Baldwin's Bunkum. But after that the Labours gave us oranges. An' noo we get apples every nicht at the Tories and oranges at the Labours. An', d'ye know this—— ?"

" Wait a moment, Podgy," I entreated. " Why do the Labours give you oranges ?"

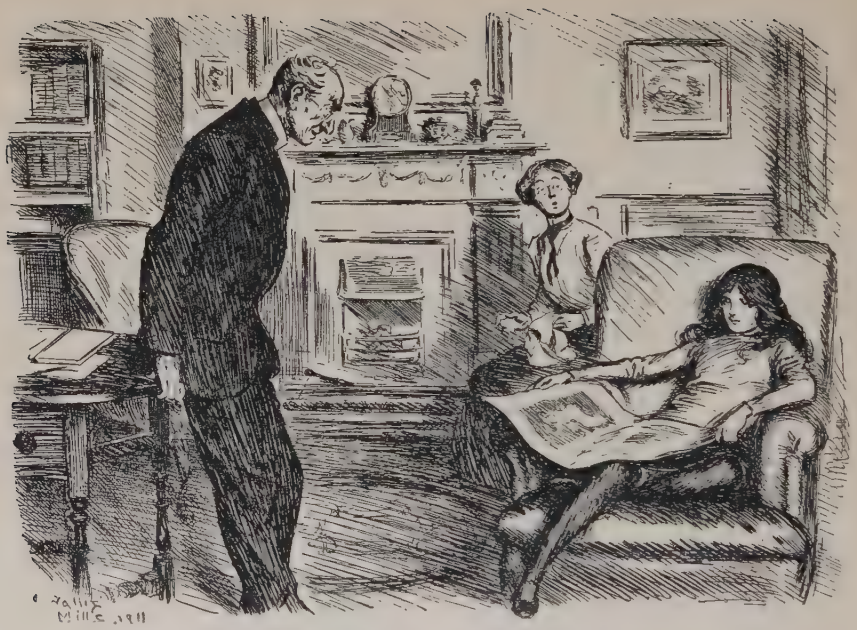
" Because I'm a member," said Podgy. " It's twopence ye pay for the Labours," he added, producing another card. This token was dark red in

TAKING CUTTINGS

"Will all those little cutlets grow up, Daddy?"



ALBERT (*to hierarch, who has slipped up on a banana skin*). "Yer wouldn't do that, guv'nor, if yer wore roller skites."



THE RECTOR. "Now, Molly, would you rather be beautiful or good?"
MOLLY. "I'd rather be beautiful and repent."

colour and bore the inscription : " The Labour Band of Youth, Auchterbrose Nucleus."

" Do you mean to tell me, Podgy, that you are a member of the Labours as well as the Tories ? "

" Ay," said Podgy calmly ; " we're a' members. It's Tuesdays we go to the Tories and Fridays to the Labours."

" And how did it come about that you joined the Labours ? " I inquired of this amazing infant.

" It was Comrade Bawl that met us when we was comin' oot from the Tories, and he said we was to go to the Labours, and we just went. My mither said I was to get goin'."

" And what happens at the Labours ? "

" We've to stand up and say after Comrade Bawl"—he took a deep breath and went on slowly—" ' I promise to steadfastly and always work for the comin' of the Red Dawn.' "

This effort seemed to have an exhausting effect on Podgy. It made me feel rather limp too.

'And after that?"

"Comrade Bawl speaks to us."

"What does he say?"

"I don't know," said Podgy. "He gets terrible angry, and then he eats his moustache. We get oor oranges when we're comin' oot. That's the best bit. D'ye know what we're gettin'?" he went on, a look of awe coming into his face. "We're gettin' two picnics. There's to be the Tories' picnic and the Labours' picnic."

"But," I suggested, "if they give you picnics perhaps they'll stop giving you apples and oranges."

"If we don't get oor apples and oor oranges," declared Podgy with absolute assurance, "we'll not go to the meetin's."

That night my sleep was seriously disturbed. In a wild dream I beheld Mr. Pinkerton and Comrade Bawl. The former was a tall, thin, delicate-looking young man. Comrade Bawl's face seemed to be all moustache. They were fighting savagely for possession of the prostrate body of Podgy, who, it was revealed to me, had been laid out by a surfeit of apples and oranges.

MOTHER. "I don't think, darlings, that you should be playing cards on a Sunday."
JACK. "But, Mummy, we're not playing properly. We're only cheating!"

"The Play's the Thing"

SMALL BOY. "It's all jolly fine. I brought my people out to buy me presents. This is about the seventh shop we've been to, and I can't get 'em away from the shows!"

FRIEND (*to depressed son of the House, whose Father is giving a little amateur conjuring entertainment*). "Buck up, old chap. It isn't *your* fault your guv'nor's making such an ass of himself."

More Metamorphoses

Persons: LAURA, aged 5½; STELLA, 3½

I

STELLA (*distinctly*). Quack, quack!
LAURA (*hoarsely*). Qu-â-ck, qu-â-ck!

Enter DADDY

DADDY. Stella! Throwing building-blocks at your sister! And as for you, Laura, I don't know what you think your best frock will be like after you've swum the nursery floor in it.

LAURA. Qu-â-ck, qu-â-ck.

DADDY. Oh, so that's it; you're a frog. Well——

LAURA. Tell him what I am, Stella. I can't speak.

STELLA. Laura's a duck that says "Quack, quack," and this is the Park pond.

DADDY. I see; and you're the Park gardener, are you?

STELLA. No, I'm Laura, throwing bread to the ducks. *Come* along, then.

DADDY. Oh, you're Laura, are you? Well, I never.

STELLA. Quack, quack!

DADDY. Here, I say, you're not playing the game; you're being a duck, not Laura.

STELLA. No, I'm not being a duck; I'm being Laura quacking at the quack-quacks. *Come* along, then.

LAURA. Qu-â-ck, qu-â-ck!

STELLA. Quack, quack!

[*And so on indefinitely, with enormous gusto.*]

II

LAURA. Well, Daddy dear, and what sort of a day have *you* had?

STELLA. Oh, I've had a awful hard day. I've——

LAURA. No, I forgot; you always say the same thing, so that had better come at the end. You ask about me first.

STELLA. Well, Mummy dear, and what have *you* been doing to-day?

LAURA. Oh, I've been very busy. In the morning I gave Mary notice.

STELLA. Oh! Did she remember to say "Thank you"?

LAURA. I'm not sure; I think a notice is something nasty. And in the afternoon Mrs. Branksome came to tea. She *is* a gossip.

STELLA. Oh!

LAURA. Don't just go on saying "Oh!" Ask about the children.

STELLA. Oh! And has my dear little old Stella been good?

LAURA. Yes, pretty good.

ASSISTANT (*temporarily lent from quite another department*). "Just sixteen pounds, Madam. Shall I wrap it up for you or shall I send it?"

"Betcher five pounds I get yer aht this over."
"'Ow much yer got?"
"Three-'a'pence."
"Orright—I'll betcher."

Scene: Street Accident

SMALL URCHIN. "Come away, Billie, or they'll 'ave us up for witnesses."

STELLA. Oh! And has Laura been good?

LAURA. Yes, Laura's been as good as gold; and so sweet with Stella, as she always is.

STELLA. Oh!

LAURA. And now, Daddy dear, what sort of a day have *you* had?

STELLA. Oh, I've had a awful hard day. I've been at a camitty meeting, and I was in the armchair, and it was a awful long meeting, and I speaked all the time. And after it was finished all the peoples came to me and said how nicely I'd speaked to them, and they'd all enjoyed theirselves ever so much. And nobody speaked but me.

LAURA. That's very nice, Daddy dear. And what did you speak about?

STELLA. Oh, I speaked—— But I don't think Mummy ever asks that.

LAURA. Well, she does now anyway.

STELLA. Oh, well, then, I speaked—I speaked—I speaked about my li'l doggie.

URCHIN (*with an inborn terror of the Force*). "Oo, Muvver! It won't, will it?"

Piggy-face

"IF," said my daughter Jane, in that very impressive shrill voice that she reserves for matters of importance—"if Daddy had a piggy-face like Mr. Manders——"

Here I stopped her. A mother still has rights when her daughter is five, and this was obviously an occasion to assert them. Hugh was laughing, of course, and Jane goes far too far without any provocation at all.

"No, Jane, you mustn't talk of poor Mr. Manders like that."

Jane sniggered ingratiatingly at Hugh, who was very busy reorganising his face.

"But, Mummie——"

"No, Jane darling, honestly you must never, never talk about piggy-faces and poor Mr. Manders. God gave him that face——"

"But, Mummy, I was only going to say that *if*——"

"JANE!" (for, after all, Hugh has his moments)—"Jane, look quick; Felix has escaped. In the garden—quick!" And with a scutter of feet she was after the mirage of the nursery cat.

"But after all," Hugh remarked, "why should we stop her? There's nothing so terrible in saying Manders has a piggy-face. He *has*."

" You know what children are " (which Hugh doesn't, since he only sees Jane in her off-times), " and Mr. Manders is coming to tea on Sunday, and unless we get that ' piggy-face ' out of Jane's head she'll be saying something drastic. After all, he *is* an influential client, Hugh, and Nannie is out on Sunday afternoons."

" Yes," mused Hugh, " poor old Manders ! Enough to scare a highly-strung kid like Jane. Sure that's the right way to stop her, though ? Repressions and complexes, you know—or is it only grown-ups who get those ? *You* ought to know, because you went to those lectures on the Psychology of the Growing Child."

So we changed the subject. And so on Sunday, as scheduled, Mr. Manders came to tea.

As a precaution we had raided the nursery. Nobody had mentioned pigs for three days, but the pigs were removed from the model farm and " Piggy and his Tail " abstracted from the games. We scoured the Ark of Noah for his two, but failed to find them.

Jane, angelic and incredibly genteel from Nannie's final ministrations, descended to the drawing-room at four sharp. Pensive, she sat in a bundle

THE RULING PASSION

URCHIN. "Got a cigarette picture, Mister?"

on the pouf. Hugh and I made conversation till the bell rang and "Mr. Manders, Ma'am," was announced by Emily.

I watched Jane. Her mouth opened and her lips pursed ominously and my heart stood still. But Jane just gulped and remained curiously silent.

Mr. Manders, porcine even in his country clothes, was evidently embarrassed by the small silent female child. We sat down to tea, on thorns.

"Piggy-face, piggy-face, piggy-face" kept singing through my mind. Hugh's eyes were wary.

"Daddy," Jane began suddenly in a silence, "if *you* had a——"

"*Jane!*" interrupted Hugh wildly, "an extra choc biscuit to-day because it's Sunday."

The acute cardiac distress that had gripped me abated as Mr. Manders took up his pleasant booming on the Red Menace.

There were two more distinct attempts on Jane's part to assist in the conversation, and these were deftly blocked with more chocolate biscuits by Hugh. In this manner we reached the end of tea.

"*Now*," said Jane, with that ominous shrillness, "now me and Manders'll play in the study." And she scrabbled ecstatically at his hand.

CAPTAIN OF THE ROVERS. "'Erbert, w'y can't yer keep up wiv the uvver forwards?"

'ERBERT. "'Cause they 'adn't ter blow up the blinkin' ball afore the game started, 'ad they?"

Hugh's eyes, set in a baleful Mussolini-like glare, met mine. But to bereave Jane of her Sunday treat would mean an evening of mere riot.

"*Mister* Manders, darling," I said weakly.

"But," shrilled Jane, "he's got a——"

Hugh sprang upon his daughter and seized her; with a wild sweep he swung her to his shoulder, and with a yelp of joy and a dreadfully plebeian hiccough of repletion Jane clung to his hair.

Craven-hearted female that I am, I fled and, fleeing, heard the study door close.

Eventually, at Jane's bedtime, I descended to the silence that wrapped the sabbatical house. Perhaps the worst had happened, and perhaps Jane had taken it upon herself to tell Mr. Manders all about his

"Hoi, Ginger, 'ere's a bloke wiv a cigerette pitcher on 'is chest."

SMALL CHILD (*rounding off an afternoon's dissipation*). "Oh, Mummy, this is what I call life!"

IMAGINATIVE LITTLE GIRL. "Fancy, Mother, only yesterday I may have been bathing with this bloater!"

unfortunate face.

Inside the study a subdued murmur of voices, wreaths of pipe-smoke and, deep in their armchairs, Hugh and his guest. Of my daughter at first I saw no sign.

Then Mr. Manders held up a warning hand, for across his waistcoat, curled and contented, Jane was snoozing off the surfeit of choc biscuits, anchored by one fist to a dishevelled cravat.

As he stirred to greet me Jane woke. " I *may* say it," she said calmly ; " Manders says so ; I asked him—you told me I mustn't—and he's not ' poor Mr. Manders ' neither."

Feeling like death, I warbled, " What do you mean, darling ? "

Very rapidly Jane intoned : " I may say what you said I mustn't say again, but I asked him if I might, and he said Yes, so I'll tell you what I was going to say when you said that I mustn't say it never again ; I was goin' to say that *if Daddy had a piggy-face like Manders has I'd love him much more than wiv a nordinary face, and I love Manders, an'-I 'll-marry-him-when-I-grow-up—so there !*"

Mr. Manders grinned amicably. " They called me that at school," he said, " and it makes me feel quite young again."

THE AGE OF MECHANISM

"Daddy, is that elephant weal?"
"Of course not, dear. It's just a toy."
"Gwacious! I know that, Daddy. I mean is it a weal toy or just a toy toy?"

Elizabeth in London

ELIZABETH went up to London to shop
In her lovely new hat that goes flippety-flop,
And nothing in London could possibly be
So smart and so full of importance as she.

Elizabeth spoke to the guard of the train;
He showed her his whistle, which hangs on a chain;
He waved his green flag before letting it drop,
But *he* hadn't a hat that goes flippety-flop.

Elizabeth saw a policeman in blue;
He'd spotless white sleeves and a pocket or two,
And he put up his hand for the buses to stop,
But *he* hadn't a hat that goes flippety-flop.

Elizabeth smiled at a soldier, who wore
A coat with brass buttons and medals galore;
He'd a big, shiny gun with a point at the top,
But *he* hadn't a hat that goes flippety-flop.

And somebody says that the King told the Queen,
"My dear, have you heard the excitement there's been?
When Elizabeth came up to London to shop
She'd a lovely new hat that went flippety-flop!"

"Now, Sonny, I wouldn't cry that way."
"Cry as you blooming well please—this is my way!"

VISITOR. "What a pretty frock, Vera! Did Mummy make it for you?"
DAUGHTER OF NEW WEALTH (*scornfully*). "Madame Drucille dresses me."

Lender and Borrower

I HAD been reading about War Debts and I was feeling completely bewildered, although I had a vague idea that I was in favour of cancellation. Suddenly my little friend, Podgy McSumph, burst into the room.

"Dae ye ken whit auld Davie Stodge said?" Podgy demanded breathlessly.

"You mean Mr. Stodge, Podgy?"

"Ay," agreed Podgy. "But it's auld Davie Stodge that's his richt name."

"Well, what did he say?"

"He was readin' the paper and he said he wanted to be deid."

"Why did he say that?"

"He was readin' the paper and he said—he said, 'Everything's in a mess-up.'"

"Poor old Mr. Stodge!"

"Whit's a mess-up? Was it auld Davie Stodge that did it? Would the polisman let him get to be deid?"

"Well, Podgy, it probably means that old Mr. Stodge is worried because

he has no money. A lot of people are worried just now because they have no money. Once upon a time there was a great war, and——"

Podgy hastily clambered up and seated himself on my knee. "Tell aboot it," he ordered, pressing the back of his head against my waistcoat and fixing his eyes on the fire.

"In this great war we spent a lot of money."

"My faither was in the war and he shooted the enemy."

"And as we had no money left——"

"It was wi' his gun he shooted the enemy."

"As we had no money left we had to get a lend of more money."

"I lended my knife to Willie Pilkie."

"That's it, Podgy," I exclaimed gratefully, as I concocted a little parable which, I hoped, would illustrate, to myself as well as to Podgy, the expediency of cancelling War Debts.

"Willie Pilkie'll need to gie me back my knife," insisted Podgy.

"But you have another knife?"

"I've got three ither knifes," explained Podgy proudly.

"Exactly. Now I am going to tell you a story. Once upon a time three brave little boys set off to explore a tropical island."

AUNT (*who is entertaining nephew*). "I'll just leave you to play with your toys for a few moments, Tommy. Now don't go trying those tools on the furniture."
TOMMY (*sotto voce, delightedly*). "That's an idea. I never thought of that."

SMALL BOY (*who has been sent upstairs to wash his face*). "Mummy, are your ears part of your face or part of your neck?"

SMALL GIRL. "Uncle, can I have something to sit on? I'm not tall enough for my straw."

BOY. "Your kid's give me a penny to come an' take 'is castor-oil for 'im."

MOTHER (*to Roy, who has been to a party in her absence*). "I hope you washed your hands before tea."

ROY. "I hadn't time to wash both, but I kept the other one in my pocket."

" Maggie Stoorie's to get comin'," intimated Podgy.

" And Maggie Stoorie."

" I'm to be the heid yin."

" The leader of the expedition was called Podgy McSumph and he had four knives."

" Yin o' them's got three blades."

" The name of one of the other boys was Willie Pilkie."

" I kent he would be comin'," sourly.

" When they landed on the island our brave explorers found that it was infested with fierce tigers."

" And I'm to be chasin' the tigers."

" They at once proceeded to make a camp to defend themselves against these wild animals. While the work was going on Willie Pilkie said to Podgy McSumph, the brave leader of the expedition, ' Will you lend me a knife, Podgy, because I have lost mine ? ' And Podgy McSumph, who was as good as he was brave, gave a loan of his knife to Willie Pilkie."

" But he'll need to gie me it back," reiterated Podgy.

"Hi! Why don't you look after that child? D' you want him to be run over?"
"Garn! Run over! 'E's only kiddin' 'e's a copper. Can't 'e 'ave 'is bit o' fun?"

FIRST DESPERATE CHARACTER. "If that copper was to git yer, Billie, would yer biff 'im one, or would yer let 'im pinch yer easy?"
SECOND DESPERATE CHARACTER. "I'd let 'im. *They* can always get 'elp."

" Shortly afterwards, to the surprise of all, Willie Pilkie was observed to be making off rapidly in the direction of the jungle."

Podgy stiffened. " Ye've went an' ye've let Willie Pilkie run awa' wi' my knife," he complained bitterly.

" Podgy McSumph immediately set off in pursuit. He ran as hard as he could and came upon a terrible sight. There in a clearing of the jungle stood Willie Pilkie, confronting a huge tiger that had been coming to attack the camp."

" Was Willie Pilkie fighting the tiger wi' my knife ?"

" He was. And when he saw this the gallant Podgy McSumph called out, ' Well done, Willie Pilkie. By your bravery you have saved us. And when you have killed the tiger you can keep my knife for ever and ever——"

" I did not," interrupted Podgy. " I went right up to Willie Pilkie and I said—I said, ' If ye don't gie me back my knife the noo I 'll bash yer heid aff.' "

I am now trying to stop thinking about War Debts.

SMALL URCHIN. " 'Ere, this bat don't arf sting at the bottom, an' the 'andle keeps knockin' me in the teef."

"No—not if you was to kill me I wouldn't be Cambridge!"

Missed Opportunities

IT was with deliberate intent that I tackled my son John on the subject of his school report in the presence of his grandmother. In the first place I considered that the occasion would gain added solemnity if it assumed the guise of a family conclave. In the second place it struck me as an admirable opportunity for letting my mother see that I was fully alive to my responsibilities as a father—a fact which, I regret to say, she does not always appreciate.

" Now look here, John," I began, frowning at the offending document in my hand, " this is a very unsatisfactory report. It could hardly be worse. ' Divinity : Poor. English : Has ability if he would only try to use it. Latin : Appears to take no interest in this subject. French : Disappointing ; shows little sign of improvement. Mathematics : His work is spoiled by carelessness.' And the headmaster says : ' I fear he has not made the most of his opportunities.' This is perfectly disgraceful." And I transferred my frown to my offspring.

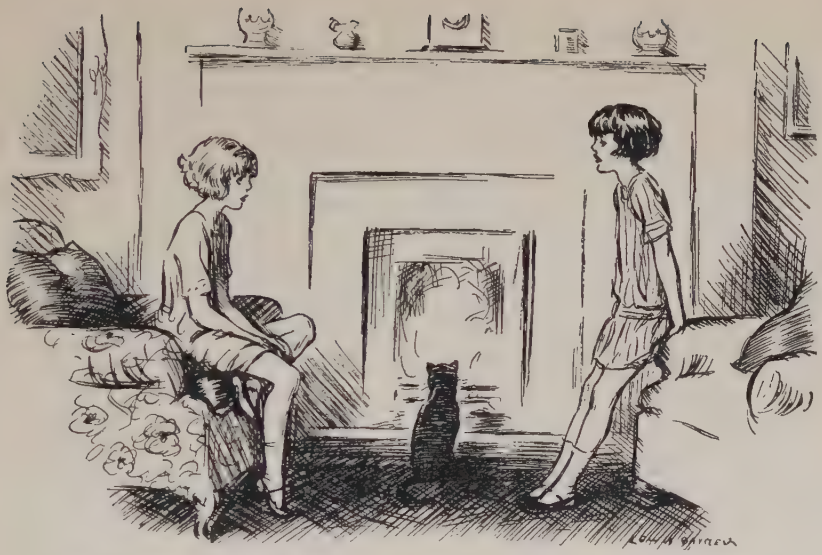
" But I don't call that such a bad report, dear," said my mother in a gentle voice.

I looked at her in amazement.

" Not a bad report ? " I protested. " If this is not a bad report I should like to know what is."

" I only meant," she replied deprecatingly, " that it is not bad compared

"Mummy, I've come to the conclusion that you are more beautiful than me. What a mercy we're different types!"



BETTY (*after an awakening talk from Nurse*). "Do you believe there is a Devil, Joan?"

JOAN. "No, of course not—no more than Santa Claus. It's just Father."

with the reports you used to get when you were at Mr. Hussey's."

This was too much, but before I could speak she continued :—

" Don't you remember when you were caned for keeping a hedgehog in the dormitory ? "

" No," I lied.

" And when you were nearly expelled for shooting Mrs. Hussey's pug with a catapult ? "

" I didn't hurt it," I expostulated ; " and it was a thundering good shot, right across the playground."

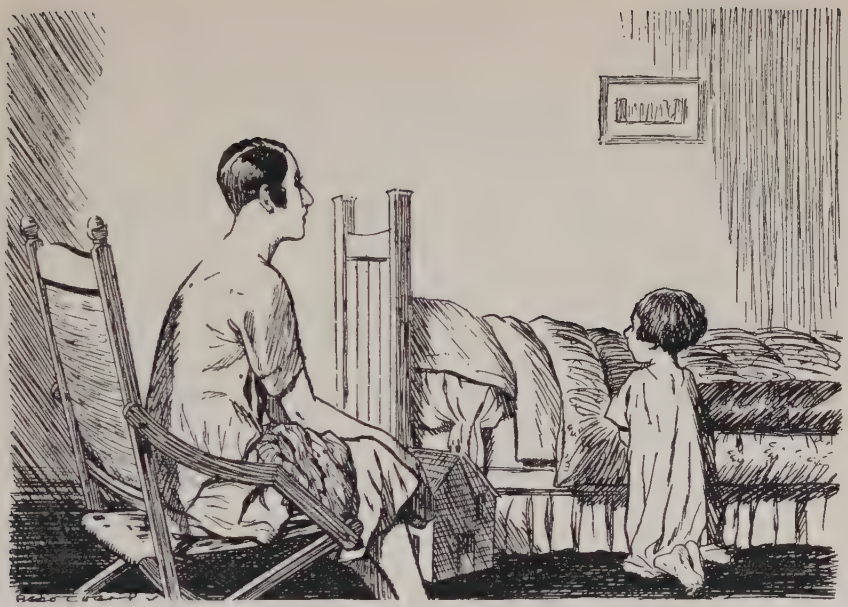
" And when you were stopped from playing in a cricket-match because you put a frog in the French master's desk ? "

" That was a dirty shame," I exclaimed with heat, for the memory of that injustice still rankled.

" And that time when you spent nearly all your journey-money on an owl and had to tip the porter at Paddington with a lead-pencil and give the cab-man who drove you to Euston your name and address because you hadn't enough money for the hansom ? And how you had to travel to Watford with a half-ticket, although you were nearly fourteen and tall for your age, and——"

" And how the bally owl escaped out of the basket and flew round the carriage and all the women screamed ! " I found myself exclaiming.

GENTLE VOICE FROM BOY. "Doctor, if you're looking for my chest, I *think* you'll find it in front."



"Don't mumble your prayers, Helen. I can't hear a word you say!"
"I wasn't speaking to you, Mother!"

Then I pulled myself together and said coldly—

" But I fail to see what all this has got to do with John's report. And in any case old Buz—I mean Mr. Hussey—never knew about all that."

My mother rose.

" Well, I will leave you," she said. " Don't be too hard on John, dear."

When I had closed the door behind her I turned to my son. To my astonishment his face wore a look I had never seen on it before. He was gazing at me with eyes of reverence.

" My word, Daddy," he said after an awkward silence, " I had no idea that you'd been such a sportsman when you were young ! What did the porter say when you gave him that lead-pencil ? And did you get the owl back into the basket ? And you might show me how to make a catapult. We haven't got a pug, but there's a perfectly good cat."

His expression changed to one with which I was more familiar as he went on : " I *have* led a rotten dull life at school. I quite see now what old Bruggers—I mean Mr. Bruce—meant by saying I hadn't made the most of my opportunities."

EFFUSIVE VISITOR. "I've just been to see Mrs. Smithson—so excessively proud of her children; but, poor dear, I'm afraid her swans will always be geese. Now *your* darlings are just the reverse."

The Witch

I'D been fast, fast asleep, but I'm positive I'd woken,
And it really wasn't only just a dream ;
There was something in the room, and I daren't have spoken
And I didn't even try to scream ;
For sitting by the fender was a strange small figure
With a coal-black cat on her knee ;
She was rather like a dwarf, not a wee bit bigger,
And she pointed at the bed and me.
She 'd a long grey cloak and a hat like a steeple,
And a buckle was shining on her shoe ;
And she wasn't dressed at all like ordinary people,
So I think it was a witch—don't you ?

A faint light glimmered through the window-curtain
On her face, that was old and thin,
With a hook-beaked nose, and I wouldn't quite be certain
But she seemed to have a beard on her chin ;
And there by the fireplace (with no fire in it)
The person sat on and on,
Till I just shut my eyes for a teeny-tiny minute,
Then I opened them, and she was gone.
She must have flown away, for she went so nimbly
On a broom-stick (as I know they do);
And Nurse says " they generally vanish up the chimbley,"
So I'm sure it was a witch—aren't you ?

TEACHER. "When is your little brother coming to Sunday-school, Alfred?"
ALFRED. "Please, Miss, Mother don't wish 'im to take up religion just yet."

"I must go now; I've got to be washed. I'm going to a party."
"Oh, they wash me, party or no party."

To the Manner Born

"AND what makes you think that Peter is definitely marked out for a career at the Bar?" my wife asked.

"I was thinking," I said, "of his masterly defence when you charged him with surreptitiously and feloniously removing the three doughnuts."

Doughnuts had been ordered because the Vicar's wife was coming to tea; she is so fond of them. The number three was in the nature of a compromise. The sight of four or more doughnuts on a plate would, we decided, give both of us indigestion, while two or under might make our guest feel a little diffident about taking a second one.

"But I'm sure he took them, dear," my wife insisted; "who else would or could have done so? The theory that the doughnuts came to pieces in Mary's hands is too fantastic altogether. Peter took them all right."

"Yet you acquitted him of the charge," I said.

"Yes," she admitted; "but what else could I do in——"

"In the face of his masterly defence? Exactly," I said.

Our son and heir had indeed risen to the occasion. It was pre-eminently desirable, he pointed out, in a case like this, where suspicion seemed to be

the only evidence against him, that motive be proved. Now what motive, he asked, could a boy who had just finished his tea—a tea with which the most exacting seven-year-old could not possibly find fault—have for stealing three doughnuts. He admitted that there might be other boys less fortunate than himself who might be tempted to steal—boys with less generous mothers who did not understand the importance to a growing boy of a liberal supply of cake. But he, Peter, was under no such temptation. Why, he asked, should he steal doughnuts when, if he wanted some, all he had to do was to ask for them in the certainty that his wise and kind mother would see that they were immediately forthcoming. No, he concluded, the charge was patently ludicrous in view of the circumstances of his home life.

" Masterly defence or not, I do not want Peter to embrace the Law," said my wife with an air of finality. " Such a marvellous boy is certain to be a success, no matter what he takes up ; and I don't think the legal profession can be quite nice if the prospects of success demand that he first attain proficiency in the art of deceiving his mother."

" But think of the rewards of success," I protested ; " five hundred pounds a day just to argue——"

Suddenly the front gate banged and we looked out of the window to see

ENRAPTURED SMALL GIRL (*returning to country cottage for the holidays*). "Oh, Mummy! the pictures on the seed-packets have come true."

CAPTAIN (*to juvenile sportsman who has a sister in the smartest munition circles*). "Garn! You ain't goin' to play football with us in them boots!"

OUR CAPTAIN. "Decent of him to carry the bags."
OUR VICE. "Yes; I suppose he'll expect to play now!"

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

WRETCHED BOY. " 'Ere! Ain't you got a hoop of your own to play with?"

the subject of our discussion running up the drive.

" Where's he been to ? " I asked.

" He went over to the Robinsons' just before you came in," my wife replied. " He went over to mend Joan's scooter for her ; but he seems to have come straight back home again. He must have quarrelled with the young lady. I hope you're proud of our son," she continued—" deceives his mother, argues the point and quarrels with little girls——"

" Really, my dear," I interrupted, " I am surprised you can think our son capable of such an ungentlemanly act. A veiled innuendo or two, perhaps, a suggestion by him, maybe, that Joan's conduct fell short of the standard demanded of a lady, but vulgar quarrelling—no, I can't believe that."

" Perhaps you're right," she agreed ; " more likely, with his legal instincts, he refused to drive a single nail unless a ' refresher ' was forthcoming."

" And why shouldn't he ? " I asked.

" Is that you, dear ? " she sang out as we heard someone rush down the passage.

Peter entered very hot in the face and short of breath.

" Have you quarrelled with Joan ? " she asked him.

"No, Mummy, of course I haven't," he replied.

"Then why did you come straight back home again? You couldn't have finished mending the scooter in that short time. You must have been quarrelling," my wife insisted.

In view of Peter's answer I am inclined to agree with my wife. There are better things in store for him than a life of comparative poverty as a successful barrister.

"No, really, Mummy," he answered, "I haven't been quarrelling with Joan. I had to come back for my tools."

SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

"Was it you as chucked that there stone at me last night? Tell the truth now, an' if yer say it wasn't I'll 'it yer 'ard!"

Smith Minor Again:—*Q.* "*Notre voisin est mort d'une congestion pulmonaire. A.* Our neighbour died in a crush on a Pullman car."

Exam. Season:—INDUSTRIOUS LAD (*to Companion*). Got up your subject? IDLE LAD. Subject? No. Don't see the object.

MOLLY (*at the jam-cupboard*). "Won't any of the keys fit, Bobby?"
BOBBY. "No."
MOLLY. "Then let's wait till Mummy comes back and get her to give us something for being good."

"Bobby, you've not washed your hands."

"Oh! haven't I just, Miss Smith? You go and look at the towel and you'll jolly soon see."

INVERSE RATIO

SMALL BOY (*suddenly*). "What are Horses made of, Uncle?"
UNCLE. "Oh—Flesh and Blood, of course."
SMALL BOY. "I thought they were made of Cats'-meat."

Elizabeth in the Garden

ELIZABETH walked in the garden at dawn
When the dew is all sparkly and wet on the lawn,
And there on a rose-bush and quite by himself
Elizabeth says she discovered an elf.
He was shining his shoes and he sang all the while,
And he smiled at Elizabeth *such* a nice smile!

Now it's no good to say such a thing couldn't be
For you weren't in the garden and so couldn't see;
And Elizabeth says (and I'm sure that she's right)
That it's very important his shoes should be bright.

Elizabeth walked in the garden at noon
When the air is alive with the bees' gentle croon,
And there in the shade of a sweet-smelling stock
A dear little fairy was ironing her frock.
And she said to Elizabeth, "Drat it! My dear,
These gossamer gowns are most plaguy, I fear."

Now it's no good to say this is simply absurd
For you weren't in the garden, so couldn't have heard,
And Elizabeth says (and I'm sure that she knows)
That fairies quite often use words such as those.

Elizabeth walked in the garden at eve
When the sleepy old sun's in a hurry to leave,
And under a toadstool Elizabeth found
A baby hobgoblin curled up on the ground.
He'd a tiny brown face and no hat on his head,
But a jaunty red feather was perched there instead.

Now it's no good to say that this can't have been so,

For you weren't in the garden, so how could you know?

And Elizabeth says (and I'm sure she's correct)

That a jaunty red feather is what you'd expect.

PROMISING BOY. "I've just blown in, Uncle, to wish you many happy returns of my birthday, which was yesterday."

MOTHER (*after reproving Father for giving Bobby a taste of cherry brandy*). "How do you feel, darling?"
BOBBY. "Oh, Mummy, it's too lovely—just like central heating!"

"Now don't forget to brush your teeth, dear."
"Must I, Mummy? It's my favourite thing I hate to do."

MABEL (*who has recently had a difference with her nurse*). "And please bless Mummy and Daddy. And please bless Nanny—but not much!"

MOTHER (*to Bobby, whose sister is going away*). "Why are you crying, dear? You're always fighting with Delia and don't seem to love her."

BOBBY. "I don't love her, but I need her."

A Theological Problem

I HAVE in my household a daughter who invariably communicates with me on the more important issues of life by means of letters. When I come down to breakfast, for example, I may find on my plate some such note as this :—

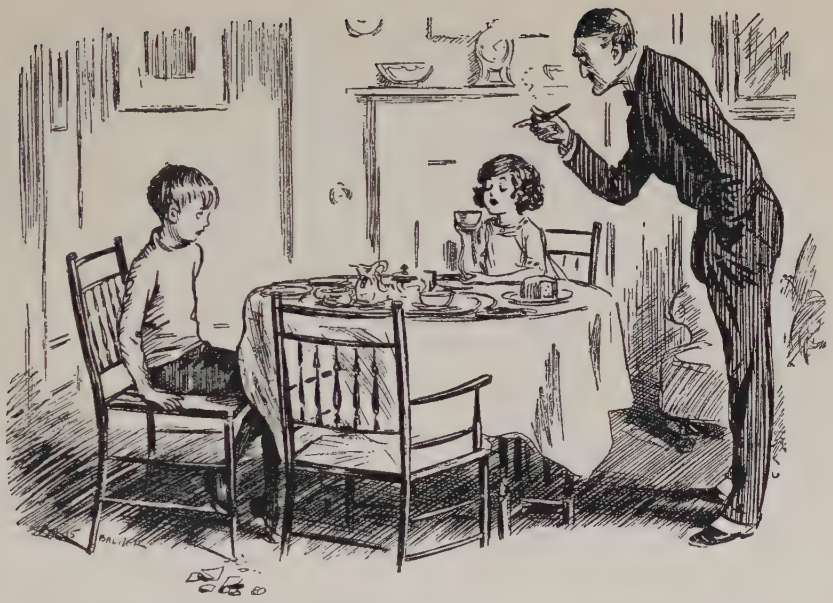
> DEAR DADDY,—I want a stamp allbum. They are two and nine and I only have one and three, what had I better do ? Your loving daughter,
> EVE

Of course, being a strong man, I do not, in response to this, tamely hand over the needful at once, though in the end it is inevitable ; I write perhaps (for to answer verbally is against the rules) suggesting that time and a little saving will overcome the difficulty. Then the correspondence really starts, and I am bombarded with some of the quaintest arguments which ever came from the head of a youthful Clarissa.

These bouts have been most enjoyable in the past, and I have always welcomed the appearance of the little pink envelope beside my plate. But,

MOTHER (*superintending the packing of boy returning to school*). "Well, that's everything. There's still space for another book, if you like."

SON. "Yes, I noticed the space, Mother; but it looks to me more like the shape of a cake."



FATHER (*to troublesome small boy*). "Now look here, Tony. I shan't warn you again. The very *next* time you misbehave you go *straight* upstairs to bed."

SMALL SISTER. "And that's *that*. Isn't it, Daddy?"

alas ! I have during the past week become involved in a theological discussion which has practically left me prostrate. It arose out of a small but lamentable decease in the domestic circle.

DEAR DADDY [ran the first epistle of this series],—Do wite mice go to heven ? Your loving daughter, EVE

I replied to this with some wariness. " I think it possible," I wrote, " but I am not certain."

The answer rather startled me. " If they don't then I don't want to go either," wrote the downright young lady.

Pondering this I became slightly alarmed for my daughter's spiritual future. After all, this was not to be jeopardised for a mere mouse, and white at that. So I plunged.

" I have no doubt the better behaved ones do," I replied.

" Would Horace ? " The question was awaiting me at dinner, and there was something so appallingly direct about it that I began to hedge again.

"Wonder why 'e always lifts one leg."
"If 'e lifted 'em both 'e couldn't stand, silly."

CASHIER (*in small general stores*). "Where's the carrier?"
BOY. "'E's gorn."
CASHIER. "But he hasn't been for his beer money."
BOY "Then 'e ain't gorn."

"Do let the children come to tea with Marmaduke on Sunday; it's his birthday. I always call him Mummy's little Easter Egg."

"So far as I have observed," I wrote, "Horace was a nice-minded little mouse."

I might have spared myself the trouble, for the question was merely repeated with what seemed almost a note of sternness: "Would Horace?"

"Yes," I wrote, plunging again. As a churchwarden I was becoming a little dubious of my position, but I cherished the hope that this terse reply, with its air of finality, would close the correspondence. The appearance of another pink note shattered that hope.

DEAR DADDY,—Will he have his wiskers and be able to sniffle at things? If he can't sniffle at things he won't be happy. Your loving daughter,

EVE

I now began to realise the dangerous nature of the ground I was on, but I could see no way of retreat.

"I have no doubt," I wrote, "that he will be able to do the things he most enjoys."

It sounded fairly safe, but the stark question which sprang from it raised a new and terrible problem.

"Will Jane?"

When I tell you that Jane is our Persian cat, and that it was owing to a regrettable lapse on her part that Horace became a premature occupant of the world of Shades, you will see where I had landed myself. If all the deceased Janes were going to do the things they most enjoyed the deceased Horaces were likely to have a pretty thin time of it. And Horace was Eve's prime favourite.

For a moment I toyed with the idea of handing the whole correspondence over to the Vicar; after all it was really his department.

And then a dazzling idea—Heaven-sent, I must believe—came to me.

"As Jane belongs to your mother," I wrote, "this is a point on which she, and not I, should be consulted."

Nevertheless my head is bowed and I am wondering from which direction the next blow will fall. C. M.

"Have you been stealing apples? How was it I saw you hiding up a tree in my orchard?"

"The leaves wasn't thick enough."

"May I have this dance, Auntie?"
"Can't you get some little girl, darling?"
"My dear Auntie! If I could have got anybody else, *would* I have come and asked you?"

SMALL BOY (*about to return to school*). "Well, Good-bye, Mummy dear."
MOTHER. "But, darling, of *course* I'm coming to the station."
SMALL BOY. "I know, Mummy, but I thought if we got the worst over here we might part decently at the station."

PROUD FATHER (*to son home for half-term holiday*). "I suppose the boys sometimes talk of their fathers. Have you told them that I'm a lawyer?"
SON. "I did tell one of my pals, and he was awfully decent about it."

The Wicked Uncles

I DON'T know why uncles have always been wicked. Ever since the days of fairy tales their history is one long record of arson, murder and abduction. History books are full of their crimes. The stage reeks of them. Even in the children's very own pantomime the wicked uncles slink on and sing most villainously.

Of course they don't commit the obvious sort of crime nowadays. They do not snatch our infants from us and abandon them in a forest. The modern

SMALL GIRL. "Please, Auntie, may I have a larger helping than this?"
AUNT. "I should eat that first, dear, and then you can have some more afterwards."
SMALL GIRL. "Oh, but, you see, I've given up second helpings in Lent."

uncle finds an outlet for his criminal tendencies in giving presents. A lot can be done by the cunning selection of seasonal and birthday gifts.

They begin with a gift of a toy-trumpet " to keep the little beggar quiet," but of course they don't stay to hear the little beggar being quiet with a new toy-trumpet. A toy-trumpet is a nasty insidious gift.

Consider the effect of a toy-trumpet on a child's psychology. If we take his trumpet away (as we probably shall) we are filling him full of inhibitions and suppressed complexes. A sense of frustration will poison his mind. In

DISGUSTED PARENT. "Nah then, 'Orace, set abaht 'im! Anyone can see the 'orse 'as lost all respect for yer."

JOAN (*left in care of chauffeur while Father votes*). "Perkins, are you a Tariff Performer or a Free Tradesman?"

later years he will suffer loss of memory and will-power, and he will probably end as a member of the criminal classes. And all because we have (purely in self-defence) taken away the little trumpet which a wicked uncle gave him.

On the other hand, if we don't take it away, he may grow up with a trumpet complex. He may join a brass band and make depressing noises outside respectable houses on Christmas-Eve. But more probably he will play a saxophone at the local Palais de Danse. This, you must admit, is serious.

Of course it may not be a toy-trumpet. It may be a camera. With this the innocent small boy learns to produce pictures of headless men, recumbent ladies with any amount of foreshortened legs, cows browsing quietly on the roof of the church, and all those freaks which can be produced with a small camera. A lad trained to use a camera like this is quite likely to end up at Chelsea, where he would produce green men with legs like pillow-cases, one-eyed ladies and four-dimensional cows.

Or, again, the wicked uncle, assuming the mantle of the author of " Self-Help " to conceal his guile, may buy his innocent victim a money-box. This

MABEL (*to brother who has got the best of the cherries*). "You really are a pig, John."

MOTHER. "It's not very nice to call anyone a pig, darling."

MABEL. "All right, I won't. But the next time I see a pig I shall call it 'John.'"

BETTY. "Mummy, how did these two marks get on my arm?"
MOTHER. "The doctor made them. They're vaccination marks. There ought properly to be four of them."
BETTY (*after much deliberation*). "Mummy, did you *pay* for four?"

will not make him grow up into the cashier of a bank. On the contrary. A money-box is an outrage on a child's sense of justice. He puts in a penny and nothing happens; not even a piece of damp chocolate comes out. He has been robbed. The problem occupies his mind for days, and in the end he steals a knife from the kitchen and burgles his own money-box. By this time his character is ruined. The world is full of beach-combers and remittance-men whose characters were ruined by the present of a money-box.

But of all the appalling gifts the worst is the scooter. Not much harm in a scooter, you will say. Yet it is full of guile. It contains the germ of mechanical locomotion.

The business doesn't stop at an ordinary scooter. There are super-scooters with f.w.b. and cellulose finish, and no modern youngster will be contented to propel a painted wooden scooter, sticky with varnish, without demanding a new model with all sorts of gadgets.

The super-scooter will not satisfy any healthy child long. A child's bicycle is the next step, and before many months have passed we shall have to

"Bless Father and Mother and everyone in this house. Our new telephone number is Drake 7538."

OLD LADY (*interrogating her chauffeur's small boy*). "Well, my little man, and do you know who I am?"

SMALL BOY. "Yes, you're the old lady what goes for rides in my daddy's car."

buy him a real bicycle. And you know where that will lead.

All these young men in greasy overalls who tear along arterial roads with the throttle open, carrying on their grids fluffy young things in synthetic silk stockings, were once nice little boys in sailor suits to whom uncle gave a red-and-yellow wooden scooter.

We don't want Peter to grow like that. We don't want to wait in fear and trembling for a call from the hospital summoning us to his bed, or even to that of a pedestrian that he has mangled. We don't want to see him in court getting his licence endorsed, and most certainly we couldn't contemplate one of those fluffy young things as a daughter-in-law.

Peter has four uncles and only one birthday a year. You'd think one of them would have given him a useful present. A cricket bat, for instance. They must surely realise that bats get broken.

But no, uncles must work off their wickedness complex, and Peter must have his character ruined by toy-trumpets, cameras, money-boxes and scooters, when he might have learned to put his leg well across and play a straight bat.

W. E. R.

BOBBIE. "My dance, I think?"
MADGE. "I'm sorry, it's Duncan's dance."
BOBBIE. "Oh! that's all right. I bought you from him for two shillings."

The Pacifist

PONSONBY is the secretary of our local branch of the League of Nations Union and an indefatigable worker in the cause of universal peace. The season of Christmas naturally always finds a responsive welcome in Ponsonby's heart, and his nephews and nieces benefit.

"I want a nice present for a small boy of about—er—eight," said Ponsonby when at last he had managed to pin down an assistant in the large toy-shop.

"Certainly, Sir," said the assistant. "Something mechanical?"

"Yes, I should think so," said Ponsonby. "What do you suggest?"

The assistant dived at a counter piled with painted clockwork.

"This is the very latest thing, Sir," he said, "a model tank complete with a small quick-firer. When wound up it will travel across the nursery floor, firing as it goes. A most amusing and instructive toy."

"No," said Ponsonby. "I disapprove of tanks."

The assistant glanced at Ponsonby and decided that he must be a retired

Scene: Children's Dance

"I say, Charlie, what's the etiquette? My next partner's looking for me and this one's still hard at it."

colonel of the Royal Horse Artillery or something of that sort. They disapprove of tanks quite a lot.

"Certainly, Sir," he said soothingly. "Nasty things, really, tanks. Knock all the sport out of war, I always say. Perhaps this would be more acceptable—a complete battery of field-guns, with horses and drivers complete, in box, one guinea?"

"No," said Ponsonby.

"We have a large assortment of very excellent lead soldiers of all regiments," said the assistant hopefully. "We guarantee the details. Or mule batteries with guns which take to pieces—a very popular present for young boys."

"I don't want anything military," said Ponsonby.

The assistant had another good look. Ponsonby resembles a retired admiral even less than a dug-out colonel, but the assistant was not a psychologist.

"This," he said, "is an exact model of the latest battleship, with gun-

PAT (*play-acting*). "Have you lodgings to let?"
BARBARA. "Excuse me, have you any parents?"
PAT. "Yes."
BARBARA. "I'm 'fraid we *never* take in children with parents."

SMALL GIRL (*listening to cat, who has just begun to purr*). "Oh, Mummy, I think pussy's number is engaged!"

VICTIM. "Who did that?" WOOLLEY (*apologetically*). "'Obbs, off Tate."

turrets complete. The ammunition hoist works whilst the ship is in motion. Or perhaps a model submarine would be more——"

"No, it wouldn't," said Ponsonby. "I don't want anything to do with the Navy."

The assistant wiped a little perspiration from his brow. Ponsonby looks least of all like an intrepid bird-man, but the assistant's job was to sell him *something*.

"Certainly, Sir," he said. "What about a model aeroplane?"

"That's better," said Ponsonby. "Links of Empire, and all that."

"Quite," said the assistant. "This is a very fine model, guaranteed to fly a hundred yards in any direction. You will notice that it is fitted with bomb-racks and a supply of bombs, which explode harmlessly but with a sharp report. A very amusing toy, Sir."

"Look here," said Ponsonby, "haven't you got anything which isn't connected with slaughter?"

The assistant looked round vaguely; the question was new to him.

"We—er—perhaps—er—a model farmyard?"

"I'll take it," said Ponsonby.

* * * * * * *

A few days later he called to see if his selection had proved satisfactory.

"I hope I got the right present for George," he said to the boy's mother.

STREET-CRICKETER (*with great presence of mind*). "Quick! Bandits!"

PHYSICAL CULTURE IN OUR PARKS

"Nar, lis'n. Yer grabs at the bar, swings yerself forw'd, an' when yer gets back to abart so fur, jab yer leg over the bar, just as if you're gittin' on to an 'orse, 'eave wiv orl yer might, on'y not too 'ard, 'oller yer back orl the time an' let ev'ry movement be heasy an' griceful. . . . Wot d'yer say? yer can't reach the bar? Oh! go an' 'ave another *swing*."

BOY. "No, thank you, I don't think I can eat any more. But I'd like to have the jam near me."

" He simply loves it," she said. " It fits in so well with his other presents. Come and see."

Ponsonby ascended to the nursery. In the middle of the floor stood the model farm, its windows filled with miniature sandbags and its wooden walls loopholed for rifle fire. A company of khaki-clad soldiers was in possession, with a model ambulance detachment to the rear. Some yards away a battery was engaged in putting down a hot barrage, under cover of which more infantry, prone on the floor, were wriggling to the attack. From the further corner a tank advanced, firing at it came.

" Isn't it ripping ? " said the nephew of the apostle of peace.

L. DU G.

SMALL BOY (*in a whisper*). "Look, Mummy, at that fat lady."
LADY. "Don't whisper, darling; it's rude."
SMALL BOY. "Well, what's a whisper for?"

SMALL GIRL (*after her first attendance at "grown-up" service*). "Why did the clergyman sing all the time he was reading? I couldn't hear a word he said."

ELDER SISTER. "Hark at her, Mummy! He wasn't singing, silly—he was intuning-in."

THE BARGAIN

"Look here, old chap, I'll dance twice with your ugly little sister if you'll take my mater down to grub."

AT THE PANTOMIME

"Why don't you turn round, dear?"
"But it's much funnier, Mummy, watching Daddy and Uncle.'

Parties

PARTY frocks are funny, and I don't
know what they do
To make them full of somebody who's
never really you ;
Party shoes are horrid, and my feet are
always slow
When I've been turned from somebody
to someone I don't know.
I know Nancy when she wears her
cotton frocks,
I know Peter in his muddy shoes and
socks,
I know both of them and both of them
know me,
But we never seem to know us when we
all go out to tea.

Party bread-and-butter isn't stodgy
bread-and-scrape,
But no one dares to bite it into any pretty
shape ;
Party cakes are lovely and they've sugar
on the top,
But no one goes on eating till they really
want to stop.
I know Nancy when she's butter on
her thumbs,
I know Peter when he's making lots of
crumbs,
I know both of them and both of them
know me,
But we never seem to know us when we
all go out to tea.

"Is that some new kid next-door?"

"Yes; I expect his people'll use their pennyworths of platform-tickets to the bitter end."

HARASSED ELDER SISTER. "Nah then, Albert, don't go throwin' them banana-skins on the rails or yer'll have us all skiddin' orf the line."

KINDLY OLD LADY (*to boy who has been hit by cricket-ball*). "My poor child! Are you hurt?" BOY. "No; but it's squashed my silkworms."

AUNT (*to small niece, paying her first visit to the family*). "And do you like my little girl, Barbara?"
BARBARA (*tactfully*). "Well, do you?"

Party sort of parties shouldn't ever be *begun*,
But to-day I gave a party that was only just for fun,
For Peter, me and Nancy ; it was really quite all right—
We didn't change our jerseys and we weren't a bit polite.

I knew Peter when he climbed the garden-wall,
I knew Nancy in her crumpled overall,
I knew both of them and both of them knew me ;
We knew each other quickly and as well as well could be.

Breaking it to Kitty

"AND what do you think the children will say to a new mother?" asked Monica, after we had settled things to my satisfaction.

"Oh, they'll be a little surprised perhaps at first," I said confidently, "but they'll soon get accustomed to the change and be as glad and as happy about it as we are. Children need a mother."

"Martin, of course," she said, "will be all right"—Martin is eleven and away at school—"but Kitty may be a little difficult."

"But, darling, Kitty is only seven—just a baby. She'll be tremendously surprised and excited just at first, but she will accept it as she accepts the sun and rain—as the natural order of things. Marrying and giving in marriage," I ended sententiously, "are not part of her conscious mental make-up just yet."

"Shall I tell her or will you?"

"We'll both tell her."

We made our way up to the play-room and found Kitty lying on the rug eating caramels, cuddling a doll and stickily turning over the pages of an annual.

SMALL BOY (*fascinated by milking process*). "Now put it all back and do it again."

She received the news wide-eyed but very graciously. "Oh!" she exclaimed, and, coming over to Monica, held up her face to be kissed. Presently she said, "Daddy, may I have a stamp? I want to write to Martin."

We both laughed. "To tell him the news?" I said.

We left Kitty lying prone in the perilous adventure of literary composition with a stamped and addressed envelope by her side.

She gave me the letter to post before she went to bed.

I confess it with shame; it was entirely my own crime, Monica having no part whatsoever in the violation. I opened the letter and read :—

dea martin hes puled it of and you ow me a box of chox dont forget i licke hard ones lots of lov from kitty.

SMALL BOY (*to companion on Boat-race Day*). "An' just before I come out my muvver says, 'Don't you git too near the river, 'cos yer might git pushed in.'"

A Strapping Infant :—"Congratulations to Mr. Ralph L. Cobham on the girth of a son, who arrived on Wednesday."—Montevidian Paper.

MASTER (*gently, to New Boy*). Smithers, my boy, can you tell me what a Noun is? NEW BOY (*anxious to please*). No, Sir; but I'm sure my father could.

THE HEAVENLY CHOIR

BOY (*to prostrate old gentleman just regaining consciousness*). "Please don't move, Sir; my sister is trying to jump over your middle without kicking it."

Cricitizers Confounded

"I LIKE you to look," said Jill, "but you mustn't cricitize." She licked the end of her brush.

I said, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to; but I was wondering what it was you were doing."

She filled her brush with Prussian-blue, smeared it on her palette and painted three lines, which looked as if they were meant to be straight and parallel. "That's a secret," she said.

"But won't you tell *me*?" I asked.

"I can't," she said, "because it's a secret secret, not just a secret. You were standing there cricitizing, so I thought, 'Well, I'll paint something he *can't* cricitize,' and you see," she added triumphantly, "I painted something that I didn't know *what* it was; and so you can't know either, and so you can't cricitize. You see, these are *my* paintings and I do them for *me*, not for cricitizers."

"Perhaps," I said, "I'd better go down and read my paper."

"But I like you to be up here in the nursery." So I fetched my paper and sat in the armchair.

Jill continued her labours for five minutes, then—"What are you reading now?" she asked.

I said, "The dramatic criti—I mean cricitisms."

She abandoned her brushes. "Why do people always want to cricitize?"

"So as to help other people, I suppose," I said. "You see, they tell people who read the paper what sort of a play it is; and they tell the people who act what they think of their acting."

"But suppose the cricitizers said it was a good play and you went and found it wasn't?" she asked.

"Then I'd be sorry I went," I said.

"But how do the cricitizers really know that they know what the play's about? Suppose," she added with piercing intuition, "it was like my drawing, and not about anything at all?"

"It often isn't about anything at all."

"But still it might be quite nice," she said. "When I grow up I shall paint lovely things that don't mean anything at all. And when the cricitizers come and look at them——"

"They'll say, 'Very nice, but they don't mean anything,'" I said.

"Oh no! because they won't *know* that they don't. So they'll pretend that they *do* mean something, and they'll cricitize away, and then I shall say, 'But it doesn't mean that at all.'"

"But suppose they say, 'All right; then you tell us what it *does* mean'?"

"Oh, then I shall say, 'It isn't meant to be anything and you're a lot of sillies.'"

FIRST SCHOOLBOY. "I notice your mother always cries when she sees you off."
SECOND DITTO. "Yes; it's rather rotten for me. She's really quite a good-looking woman."

SISTER. "Come away at once, John William! Can't the pore gentleman fall down wivout a crowd staring at him?"

THE MASTER MIND. "Just keep where you are a minute and I'll think of a way aht. I got 'n idea."

"What are you doing in my store-cupboard?"
"I'm afraid I'm spoiling myself."

SPORTS ITEM

Owing to family affairs Billy Scroggins will not be turning out for the Crescent to-day.

CHORUS (*to batsman who has hit wicket*). "You're aht!"
BATSMAN. "Or right, but I done it myself, mind; none of you couldn't do it."

MAN OF WEALTH (*to his son just home for the holidays*). "And why don't you like your fur coat? I'll bet none of the other boys 'ave got one."
SON. "Yes, but none of the other boys have to be called 'Skunky.' "

A Return to School

ERICA, who lives next-door and is, she informed me, six-and-a-half, came to keep me company during the absence of her mother with my wife at a committee-meeting.

"Wouldn't you all like to go to school?" she asked a little doubtfully, looking at the assembled group.

The potential scholars consisted of myself (some seven times her age); Lucifer, a black kitten, cuddlesome and adventurous; Ramsay, a white elephant of staid demeanour but with springy legs which confer an effect of gaiety, and the flaxen-haired Evangeline, who has preserved her schoolgirl complexion in spite of having had many mothers.

We admitted that we should welcome school if there was somebody to be the school-mistress.

"I am the teacher," said Erica with gravity.

"Lucifer would like to know what your name is," I suggested.

SYMPATHETIC FATHER (*to son returning to school*). "I know the feeling, old man. I used to feel just the same when my leave was up and I had to go back to France."

SON. "Yes; but then you had a revolver."

"Miss Green," she informed us.

"Miss Bethnal Green?" I inquired politely.

"Yes, Miss Bethnal Green," she agreed, rather to my surprise, though I was too tactful to show it.

"We must begin with a hymn," she announced.

"Why?" asked Ramsay, putting up his trunk to attract attention in the approved manner. I should explain that I did the speaking for Ramsay in a gruff voice.

"We always do," she said severely; "Number 2 in the little book."

I produced three books from the book-table and asked if they would do; but "Ludendorff's War Memories," "The American Illusion" and "The Good Companions" were pronounced by Miss Green to be too unlike hymn-books. On the other hand, some small diaries passed muster, and with Miss Green acting as precentor we sang each line after her, and the performance passed without comment. The "Amen" at the end I thought good, but spoilt by Lucifer yawning ostentatiously. This was followed by a prayer mut-

"I'll teach you to pinch my things! Either you comes out an' takes my costoom orf or I goes in wiv your trousis on."

A Good Reason

OLD GENT. "Now, why do you keep knocking this ball over here?"

THE JUNIOR CRICKETER. "Because it's six, Sir, every time we 'its it over."

KEEN PHILATELIST. "Please will you tell me if this 1898 five-cent Paraguay is genuine? The watermark looks a bit fishy to me."

TAILOR'S SMALL DAUGHTER. "Daddy, there's a strange pussy coming in."

VOICE FROM WITHIN. "Oh, is it a black one?"

DAUGHTER. "No; it's a—a sort of a tweed one."

SCHOOLMASTER (*at end of object lesson*). "Now, can any of you tell me what is water?"

SMALL AND GRUBBY URCHIN. "Please, Teacher, water's what turns black when you puts your 'ands in it!"

tered by Miss Green, who explained that she didn't say real words. I understood and sympathised, but Lucifer scratched one ear and shook his head very disapprovingly, while Evangeline and Ramsay wore an expression of indifference.

" Hands up for milk," ordered Miss Green.

" I don't see any milk," I said.

" There isn't any now," explained Miss Green ; " you get it, if you hold up your hand now, at eleven."

Ramsay put up his trunk and said, " May I have beer ? "

" Certainly not," said Miss Green sternly ; " there isn't beer in this school."

None of us ventured any remark, but we felt the atmosphere a little threatening. After a reading-lesson which was not very successful, because Evangeline dropped the book on the floor three times, and each time Lucifer leapt on it and worried it, Miss Green said, " We will do some spelling now." She then looked round the room and remarked, " I spy with my little eye something that begins with ' K.' "

" Karpet," said I boldly.

" Quite right," said Miss Green graciously. I kicked Ramsay, who seemed to be preparing to protest, and he fell on his side.

" Now, Ramsay, you must sit still; look at Evangeline, how well she behaves."

I do not know if this remark annoyed Ramsay, but, when Miss Green proceeded to announce that it was time for milk now, he said firmly, " I want beer."

"Were you in the Ark with Noah, Grandpapa?"
"No, my child, I was *not* in the Ark with Noah."
"Then why weren't you drowned?"

" You can't have beer," said Miss Green fiercely, " but you can have something else ; " and extracting a long thick pencil out of a satchel she proceeded to administer the " something else " with what seemed to us positive enjoyment. I was glad I had not expressed a preference for beer myself, and to relieve the situation I suggested, " Do we do any more spelling ? "

" Yes," said Miss Green ; " it is your turn."

So, catching sight of Ramsay's trunk, I said, " I spy with my little eye something that begins with ' N.' "

Miss Green fixed me with reproachful eyes and, pulling a very small skirt over her knees, said rather solemnly, " Was it ' Knickers ' ? "

" No, no," I said hastily ; " I had no idea there were such things ; the ' N ' was Ramsay's Nose."

" Quite right," said Miss Green, apparently much relieved.

When the Members of Committee returned and asked us how we had got on they were informed of the nature of our occupation.

" I hope you all behaved nicely," said Erica's mother.

" Evangeline was very good," said Miss Green with meaning.

" Evangeline is a real lady," I conceded ; and there the matter rests.

FATHER (*to son, who has been bragging at school about his father's wealth and possessions*). "You must not do it, old chap. It's such awfully bad form."
SON. "But, Dad, how are they to know about it if I don't tell them?"